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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

JAMES KLUGMANN — FOR PEACE AND SOCIALISM

ARNOLD KETTLE — HOW NEW IS THE "NEW LEFT"?

A. KHARCHEV — THE FAMILY AND COMMUNISM

JACK MOODY — THE FIGHT AGAINST DISMISSALS

DISCUSSION: MICHAEL COHEN — ON LESSONS FROM PICCADILLY

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Marxism Today

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Editorial Comments

WE all know that the International Labour Office is organised on the basis of representation of Governments, employers and workers. Yet it is with certain amusement that we read in the General Council's Report to the Trade Union Congress of "the Employers' delegates of Bulgaria, Byelorussia, Czechoslovakia, Hungary, Rumania, Poland, Ukraine, the U.S.S.R. and Yugoslavia". These are, of course, the representatives of the state industries of those countries, as distinct from the representatives of the Governments and of the trade unions.

The pukka employers from the capitalist countries have no liking for these "Communist Employer Members" as they are called in the jargon of the I.L.O. They look at them askance—wolves in sheep's clothing.

In the first place they object to them being represented at all. On this they were over-ruled, and now the pukka employers are complaining that some of these "Communist Employer Members" are always voting with the workers.

At the same conference of the I.L.O. there was a prolonged discussion on "The hours of work". The Recommendation that was finally adopted was resisted by the employers, paragraph by paragraph, with no less than eighty-seven separate votes being taken. The General Council report says:

> "The Employers' Group made a formal statement to the Chairman of the Committee protesting that the conclusions were mainly due to the unbalanced composition of the Committee, brought about by the addition of two Communist Employers' Members and the absence at various times of the government members."

However, despite the employers, the Resolution was carried. The "Communist Employers" voted with the workers' representatives.

The worker members from the capitalist countries did not always take kindly to the remarks of the Soviet representatives who appear to have looked with disapproval at the matey atmosphere of the I.L.O. It appears that all the representatives of the Socialist countries took a somewhat dim view of a recommendation for promoting effective consultation and co-operation between the public authorities, the employers' and workers' organisations "with a view to developing the economy, improving conditions of work and raising the living standards."

The General Council sadly records that:

> "Representatives of the U.S.S.R. and allied countries were of the opinion that the proposed text was weak, and that the propagation of the idea of co-operation between employers and workers helped to weaken the position of the working class. This view was not, however, shared by a majority of the Committee."

Well, the right-wing trade unionists who grace the conferences of the I.L.O could decisively refute the delegates of the Socialist world by doing just one little thing—namely, telling us the name of the state in which the workers have come to power by co-operating with the capitalist class. Until they can do that many people will consider that the Socialist world is right.

Facing Both Ways

In relation to the co-operation of the capitalist state with the employers there are a few interesting remarks in the recently published work of Mr. W. A. Robson—*Nationalised Industry and Public Ownership* (Allen and Unwin, 50s.)—which illustrate how employers find it profitable to face both ways in the present set-up of state monopoly capitalism.

In one set of circumstances, the employers' attitude is that the state can do nothing right, even when it is controlled by the employers' Party. Writing of disillusionment with regard to nationalisation, Mr. Robson says:

> "The disillusion has been mainly induced by the persistent denigration of the nationalised industries by the press, by Conservative politicians, both inside and outside Parliament, by leading businessmen and by organs like the Federation of British Industries and the Institute of Directors. For more than ten years a ceaseless campaign has been waged by the great majority of the daily newspapers to present a continuously unfavourable picture of the nationalised industries. Anything that might show in their favour is usually suppressed or discounted or given a minor place, whereas every fact that could rouse resentment or prejudice, or dissatisfaction, is magnified and given prominence."

But what a change of attitude to the state—their state—when any privately owned industry gets into difficulty! Mr. Robson points out:

> "Yet when times become difficult and when profits disappear from the aircraft industry, or when enormously profitable Atlantic liners are to be replaced, or when the cotton industry cannot face foreign competition, the tune is quickly changed and Government support is immediately invoked. We hear no more about bureaucratic incompetence and the importance of avoiding state intervention. The emphasis is now placed on the need to uphold the national interest, to maintain British prestige and to consider the matter from a standpoint which

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disregards the oft-proclaimed ability of private enterprise to manage its business in its own way." The big employers always want it both ways.

Mr. Robson is a firm believer in the "mixed economy" and state monopoly capitalism. His book deserves a more fundamental review. But he has at least hit two nails right on the head.

Presidential Address to the British Association

Sir George Thomson opened his address on "Two Aspects of Science" with a particularly fatuous and irrelevant reference to Marxism. Some people like to be amused by the fact that all Russian students have to study Marxism as a compulsory subject at the university, yet if a little serious attention were given to Marxism in the British educational system, some distinguished experts would be saved from making asses of themselves in their attempts to prove political respectability.

According to Sir George "the official attitude of Marxist countries" is that science is valued only as a means to increase man's control over nature. He implies by this, although careful to avoid a direct statement, that the Socialist countries are interested in applied science but less so in pure, that is fundamental long-term science, yet nothing could be more absurdly wide of the facts. Every scientist knows that the extraordinary developments of Soviet science and technology are based on a broad programme of "pure" research in every branch of fundamental theory. Everyone who cares can read the discussions at the General Meetings of the Soviet Academy of Sciences about which are the fundamental growing-points of science that must be encouraged and developed. It is fairly common knowledge, too, that the Soviet Union has a programme of space research designed to reveal some of the most fundamental and recondite secrets of the universe, while scientists in this country are unhappily squabbling about whether Britain can afford space research or whether she should devote her strained resources to more immediately profitable investigations.

It is a pity that Sir George had to spoil his case by such an absurd attack on Marxism, and by an equally muddle-headed attempt to place religion by the side of science as an alternative method of gaining knowledge about the nature of things. For Sir George's defence of pure science has, in fact, a serious and sincere intention behind it, and more important at a time when British science is restricted and threatened by capitalism. The real danger to science—pure and applied—comes from monopoly capitalism, which, by and large, regards science from the point of view of profits and armaments. It is very good that so many scientists today are genuinely concerned to defend the growth and advance of science and to see that it is used for the good of humanity, but they will not be fully successful if they allow themselves to be deceived by anti-Marxist nonsense.

Palais into Bowling Alley

In the popular song of "Fings Ain't Wot they used T'Be" the first verse notes that "They've changed my Palais into a bowling alley", and this change in entertainment amenities, like the deserting of frothy beer for a frothy coffee of the Espresso bars, commented on later in the same lyric, is being tried out by both the Rank Organisation and Associated British Cinemas. Some months ago each launched its first bowling *lane*, as it is more correctly called, in converted London cinemas. Both entered into arrangements with American manufacturers of bowling lane equipment; the ancient, rustic sport of nine pins has crossed the Atlantic twice, been given the electronic treatment, and now re-appears as ten-pin bowling.

Those who wish to bowl pay for each game (and can hire special shoes), while the audience (strangely enough) can watch for nothing. On the premises snacks and drinks can be obtained, so increasing the revenue of the former cinemas.

This introduction of bowling lanes is an indication of a certain social change. Other signs of this have already been noted by the major cinema owners, and as a part of their policies of diversifying their activities in attempts to offset the effects of falling cinema attendances, they have for some few years now been purveying other forms of entertainment. The ABC circuit even went so far as to convert a part of some of their cinemas into "Elstree" Ladies Hairdressing Salons (a venture that does not seem to have been successful enough to spread).

The average seating capacity of United Kingdom cinemas used to be larger than that of the U.S.A. (U.K. average seating capacity per cinema in 1949—920 seats; U.S.A.—643). With falling attendances in film-going such large cinemas were clearly no longer economic, and so in recent years a number of larger cinemas have been split up, so that a smaller cinema is formed and the spare space used for other purposes.

The Rank Organisation's Victor Sylvester Dance Studios, where people are given dancing lessons at very reasonable rates, have proved to be very successful, and following this the 3,996 seat Gaumont State, Kilburn (London), was con-

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verted early this year into a cinema to hold about 2,300, a ballroom, a Victor Sylvester Dance Studio and a restaurant, all under the same roof. At a re-opening ceremony in May this year Rank chief John Davies said that one must talk of an entertainment industry rather than a film industry; encouraged by social and economic trends, the entertainment industry had a fine future. He continued:

> "It is our belief that our important properties will become great centres of entertainment, continuing to show motion pictures but also embodying all the various forms of entertainment which are now available to you" (*The Daily Cinema* 13.1.60 and 27.5.60).

It is interesting to see that in a curious, and certainly quite unconscious way, multi-entertainment centres are being developed. These have long existed in the U.S.S.R., where cultural centres often have a cinema as a nucleus, surrounded by club and other facilities where people can pass their leisure time, and can also (for here there is no competition in the economic sense) often view TV. But it would be wrong, alas, to follow the comparison too closely, for in Britain the driving motive for the multi-entertainment centre is still profit; for cultural advance, profit is not the best patron.

Trade Unions and the Arts

Arnold Wesker's individual approach to the Trade Union movement to win a greater interest in the arts—and, in particular, in the theatre—has been given powerful backing by a resolution adopted at the recent Trades Union Congress. Moving the resolution, Ralph Bond, of the Cine-Technicians, urged that the Trade Union movement had been created to ensure that all the people, not just a privileged few, had a chance to enjoy the good things of life, not only in terms of tools and homes but of the beauty and riches of life in all its forms. He spoke of the piping through of the arts like tap water by purveyors of mass entertainment, cheapening and distorting our cultural heritage, and asked delegates to reject the idea that culture should be the reserve of the "enlightened" intelligentsia and that any old rubbish was good enough for the masses.

In the extremely good debate that followed, these points were well supported by influential delegates. The General Council's plea that anything of the kind suggested would cost money, and that therefore the resolution be referred to it for consideration, was rejected, and the resolution was adopted in the following terms:

> "Congress recognises the importance of the arts in the life of the community, especially now when many unions are securing a shorter working week and greater leisure time for their members. It notes that the Trade Union movement has participated only to a small extent in the direct promotion and encouragement of plays, films, music, literature and other forms of expression, including those of value to its beliefs and principles. It considers that much more could be done and accordingly requests the General Council to conduct a special examination and to make proposals to a future Congress to ensure a greater participation by the Trade Union movement in all cultural activities."

The adoption of this resolution by Congress is in itself a good step forward. But experience has shown the reluctance of the General Council to follow up effectively any Congress resolution to which it is allergic, and consistent pressure will be needed if practical results are to be won.

Postscript on Wain

Alexei Surkov's reply to John Wain's "Open Letter to my Russian Hosts" (referred to in last month's Editorial Notes) must have been a revelation to most readers of the *Observer*. Surkov pointed out that Wain, who had the cheek to accuse Soviet intellectuals of habitual "Doublethink", had written, within a few days of his Open Letter in the *Observer*, a personal letter to himself and an article for publication in the Soviet Union. In neither of these did he make any of the criticisms or "candid friend" comments which he reserved for his *Observer* letter, but, on the contrary, expressed quite fulsome praise for the very features of Soviet society which on his return to Britain he attacked. What must have struck open-minded readers of Surkov's letter, whether they agreed with all his opinions or not, was the contrast in moral dignity between his contribution and Wain's. We are always being told that Communists are ruthless and unscrupulous and set no store on personal relationships and intellectual integrity, but in this contest of intellectual integrity (to say nothing of common or garden social decencies) Wain had to concede to Surkov so many points that a straight knock-out would have carried less humiliation.

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For Peace and Socialism

On the Tenth Anniversary of "The British Road to Socialism"

James Klugmann

TEN years ago the Executive Committee of the British Communist Party was discussing the draft of the long-term programme—*The British Road to Socialism*—which was published for the first time in January 1951. In the following years the programme was several times put before the Party membership and Party Congress for discussion. A revised edition was adopted by the Twenty-Second Congress of the Party in April 1952. A Commission, which had considered many amendments proposed by the membership, submitted a new draft to the Twenty-Fifth (Special) Congress of April 1957, and, following the Congress, the present edition was published in February 1958.

All these amendments and discussions certainly improved and amplified the programme, but the fundamental theoretical approaches and the fundamental conceptions on which the programme was based remained constant. Two of the most essential conceptions contained in *The British Road* were the idea of the peaceful co-existence of the capitalist and socialist systems, and the conception of a transition to socialism in Britain without armed conflict. The 1951 draft programme stated:

> "Despite the acute danger of war, the Communist Party declares that a third world war is neither necessary nor inevitable.
>
> "The Communist Party rejects the 'theory' of the inevitable war between the socialist and capitalist camps. On the contrary, it declares that the peaceful co-existence of socialism and capitalism is possible. . . .
>
> "The Communist Party brands as a lie the charge that Communism is to be imposed by aggression and conquest, and declares that social transformation can only come through internal changes in accordance with the actual needs of each country. . . ."

The 1958 edition of the programme reiterated:

> "A third world war is not inevitable . . . Peaceful co-existence can only be ensured by the joint efforts of all peace forces."

The first (1951) draft of the British Road declared:

> "Britain will reach socialism by her own road . . . the British Communists declare that the people of Britain can transform capitalist democracy into a real People's Democracy, transforming Parliament, the product of Britain's historic struggle for democracy, into the democratic instrument of the will of the vast majority of her people."

At the same time it warned:

> "It would be wrong to believe that the big capitalists will voluntarily give up their property and their big profits in the interests of the British people.
>
> "It would be more correct to expect them to offer an active resistance to the decisions of the People's Government, and to fight for the retention of their privileges by all means in their power, including force.
>
> "Therefore the British people and the People's Government should be ready decisively to rebuff such attempts."

The present (1958) edition of the *The British Road to Socialism* reiterated:

> ". . . with the increasing strength of the working class and progressive movement throughout the world, a transition to socialism without armed conflict is possible today in many countries.
>
> "This is particularly true of our country, whose powerful Labour movement embodies the British workers' fighting ability and experience of struggle, and where there is a strong tradition of democratic institutions. At a time of mounting class struggle, when the entire working class is brought into action and is supported by other sections of the population, a general election fought on the issue of a socialist solution to Britain's problems could bring decisive results. It could return to Parliament a Socialist Labour and Communist majority and establish a Socialist Government which, with the backing of the people, would begin to carry through a fundamental social change."

The Present Epoch

It is timely now, ten years after the first preparation of *The British Road to Socialism*, and when the problems of peaceful co-existence have been discussed by the international Communist movement, to re-examine the fundamental propositions that lay behind the new conceptions contained in the Party's Programme, and to see how they have stood up to the exacting test of time.

The most fundamental proposition on which the Party based *The British Road to Socialism* was

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that there was a qualitatively new relation of class forces in the world, that we were living in a new, a *qualitatively* new, epoch of human society.

Lenin, in *Imperialism—the Last Stage of Capitalism*, showed how with the end of the nineteenth century the world had entered an epoch of imperialism. A small group of great imperialist powers dominated, economically and politically, the whole world. Between them the whole world was divided out into colonies, semi-colonies and spheres of influence. This was a single world-embracing system of world economy. This was the epoch of imperialism, an epoch of wars and revolutions.

But the October Revolution of 1917 already ended the epoch of imperialism as a *single* world system, and inaugurated a new epoch of human society. With the rule of the working class, and then the establishment of socialism on a sixth of the world's surface, capitalism, imperialism, *was no longer the single world system of world economy*.

The effect of the October Revolution was twofold. On the one hand the capitalist system was restricted, pushed back from a whole area of the world which it had previously dominated, turned, as it were, inwards on itself. Capitalism entered a *general* crisis—not to be confused with the cyclical booms and slumps (crises) that inevitably take place within the capitalist system, but a prolonged economic and political crisis brought about, above all, by the rise and challenge of the socialist system of the world.

All the essential *internal* contradictions of capitalism (capital versus labour; imperialism versus the colonial peoples; imperialism versus imperialism) were thereby deepened. But, at the same time a new (external) contradiction entered the scheme of things—the contradiction of capitalism as a whole versus the young rising socialist system. A new problem arose—the dominating problem of the new epoch—must the two systems inevitably clash in world military conflict?

On the other hand, the very existence of a socialist system challenged imperialism. Every advance, every economic and political success of socialism acted as a spur to the working people in the capitalist countries, to the anti-imperialist forces of the colonial and semi-colonial lands, showed that the working class *could* organise a better and more progressive form of society.

After the Second World War a whole group of European and Asian countries broke away from imperialism, and began to take a socialist road. Between the socialist countries there developed new forms of international relations, laws of development that were different from the laws of development of capitalist society, and restricted the previous laws of development of a single world imperialist system. The general crisis of capitalism was deepened.

New Relation of Forces

Forces of socialism and of peace of a *qualitatively* new strength now confronted the forces of imperialism.

The socialist system of countries now had a population of nearly 1,000 million people, or over one-third of the population of the world. They accounted for over one-third of the world's industrial output. They had a much higher rate of economic development, and it became a matter of fact, not prophecy, that they would soon overtake the industrial production of the capitalist world, that by the mid-sixties the world socialist system would account for more than half the output of the world.

Directly related to the advance of the socialist countries and of the socialist system, the national-liberation movement progressed in giant leaps after World War II, weakening imperialism from within. In 1939 the population of the colonial and semi-colonial countries was of the nature of 1,500 million, or about two-thirds of the world's population. Today, of these, some 1,400 million have taken the road of national independence, and more and more look to the socialist countries as their friends and allies. A whole vast area (despite the *economic* grip that imperialism still holds in many of those countries) is being transformed from a reserve of imperialism into a reserve of progress.

Behind the lines of capitalism the militant class forces of the working class—communist, left socialist, trade unionist—have grown immeasurably stronger, and around the working class a vast allied movement for peace, democracy and national independence. On a world scale, taking together the socialist countries, the colonial and semi-colonial countries that have won their political independence, and the forces of socialism and peace behind the lines of imperialism, there exists in the world today, if vigilant and united, a force that is now stronger than the forces of imperialism and war. Moreover history is not frozen. The forces of progress are developing in strength, they carry within themselves the seeds of the future world socialist society.

Is it not then crystal clear that it is no longer correct to define the present world epoch simply as an epoch of imperialism? Is it not clear that there is a qualitatively new situation in the world, a qualitatively new relation of class forces? Is it not clear that we are living, now, in an epoch

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when imperialism is disintegrating, when the world socialist system is growing and being consolidated, an epoch of revolution, of transition from capitalism to socialism?

Writing on the problem of characterising epochs in human history, Lenin wrote:

> "There are and there will be in each epoch separate, partial movements—now forward, now backward—there are and there will be various deviations from the average type and the average rate of the movements. We cannot know how rapidly and how successfully the separate historical movements of the given epoch will develop. But we can know and we do know which *class* is the pivot of a particular movement, determining the main direction of its development, the main pecularities of the historical scene of this epoch...."
>
> ("Under a False Flag", written about February, 1915, in *Collected Works* (Russian), Vol. 21, p. 125.)

Working towards a definition of the new epoch he wrote:

> "...the annihilation of capitalism and its traces, the introduction of the foundations of the Communist order, form the main content of the new epoch in world history that has now opened."
>
> ("False Speeches on Freedom", December 11, 1920, in *Collected Works* (Russian), Vol. 31, p. 365.)

If Lenin could thus define the situation as early as the end of 1920, is it not clear that we can no longer speak of a single epoch of imperialism, but that we are now living in an epoch of declining imperialism and transition to socialism, or in the opening words of the Declaration of the Communist and Workers' Parties adopted at Moscow in November 1957:

> "The main content of our epoch is the transition from capitalism to socialism which was begun by the great October Socialist Revolution in Russia."

Each epoch of human history has its own fundamental characteristics. What is the meaning of the present epoch of transition to socialism for the all-important question that confronts humanity—the problem of world war or peaceful co-existence?

The New Possibilities of Peace

Lenin showed that the epoch of imperialism was an epoch not only of revolutions but of *inevitable* imperialist wars. The conception of the inevitability of war was deduced directly from the fact that a group of great imperialist states dominated, economically and politically, the whole of the world. He explained this conception above all in his *Imperialism—The Highest Stage of Capitalism.*

In this work he challenged and refuted Kautsky's theory of ultra-imperialism, i.e. the theory that a single *unified* imperialist system would develop in the world, that the contradictions between the imperialist powers would diminish and then disappear. Lenin showed that the *inevitable uneven* development of the different capitalist states would, when the whole world was divided up amongst the great imperialist states, *inevitably* lead to great world wars between them for the redivision of the world according to the constantly changing relation of strength of the different imperialist powers. Finance capital and the trusts, he wrote, "...are aggravating instead of diminishing the differences in the rate of development of the various parts of world economy. When the relation of forces is changed, how else, *under capitalism,* can the solution for contradictions be found, except by resorting to *violence*?" And again: "We ask, is there *under capitalism* any means of remedying the disparity between the development of production forces and the accumulations of capital on the one side, and the division of colonies and 'spheres of influence' by finance capital on the other side—other than by resorting to war?"

In other words, the law of uneven economic and political development of capitalism, which constantly gives rise to conditions leading to military conflicts, is an inexorable law of capitalist society, so long as there is a *single* world system of imperialism, this law knows no restrictions. When imperialism dominates the whole world, wars are inevitable.

But does this theory of the inevitability of wars remain true in the present epoch when imperialism is disintegrating and a system of socialist states being consolidated?

The inevitablity of war, as Lenin analysed it, arose out of the uneven development of capitalism within a single world system of imperialism, when nothing was restricting and obstructing the operation of the laws of imperialism. But at the present period it is the socialist system, not the imperialist system, which dominates international relations. The laws of imperialism, therefore, no longer exclusively determine world events as in the past. They are contained, restricted, brought under pressure, forced more and more to yield to the laws of development of socialist society.

In other words the combined world forces for peace—the combined strength of the socialist countries, the newly independent countries (former colonies and semi-colonies) and the forces of peace within the imperialist world—*have reached a level when, if united and active, they are strong enough to stop the imperialist drive to war.*

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Has Imperialism Changed?

Does this mean that the leopard has changed its spots, that imperialism has become "converted" to peace, has ceased its drive to war? On the contrary, in some ways, the stronger socialism grows the more desperately some sections of imperialism look for solution in war. The more imperialism is restricted by the growing forces of socialism, the more certain imperialists seek to solve their internal contradiction by "solving" the external contradiction of capitalism versus socialism by the aggressive military means.

But to see *only* the aims and intentions of the imperialists, to see *only* the imperialist drive to war is to see only *one* side of the question and the question is *two-sided*.

Imperialism drives to war, but in order to wage war the imperialists need their own working people to carry out the essential and unpleasant tasks of war—to manufacture the weapons of war, to transport them, and, above all, to do the necessary fighting, slaying and dying. War of today is not, alas, as by the knights of old, carried out by the rulers of society. It is not a question of the Krupps, Rockefellers and Unilevers girding up their loins and moving into the battlefield. If the working people of the imperialist countries are necessary to wage imperialist war, they can have a decisive say on the issue as to whether such wars should be waged.

Imperialism has always counted, in its aggressive wars, on its reserves in its colonial possessions —for manpower, bases, strategic points and materials. But they can no longer count upon the greater part of these areas as reserves of imperialism.

Above all, the imperialists have to take into account the "enemy" they wish to destroy—the countries of socialism. Dare they, at a given moment, launch a war? Can they be confident of victory? Do they not feel the possibility or even certainty of defeat?

The change in the balance of forces on the international scene, the growing strength of the socialist camp, and the clearly disastrous consequences of another war, lead, as comrade Kuusinen pointed out at the Lenin Anniversary Meeting of April 22nd, 1960 in Moscow, to "a split in the ruling circles of the imperialist states."

> "There appear, alongside the thick-skulled opponents of peace, sober-minded statesmen who realise that a war with the use of weapons of nuclear destruction would be madness."

At the present stage of world transition to socialism, the world forces of peace have reached such a degree of strength, that we can say with confidence that they have the possibility of preserving peace, of imposing peace on those who desire war. Even if a war should begin, there still remains the possibility, as shown in Korea and over Suez, that the war could be cut short and brought to an end by the strength of the forces of peace.

The whole conception of peaceful co-existence is not one of "converting" imperialism to reason, to a peaceful outlook, of changing the essential aggressive nature of imperialism, but of *imposing peace* on those that drive to war. As Khrushchov put it at the Third Congress of the Rumanian Workers' Party in June, 1960:

> "He who does not understand this, does not believe in the strength and creative abilities of the working class, under-rates the might of the socialist camp, has no trust in the great attractive power of socialism, which has demonstrated its obvious superiority over capitalism."

The possibility of peaceful co-existence between the systems of socialism and capitalism is based on *practical possibilities* arising out of the new relation of forces within the world. It does not, of course, mean that the danger of war is over, that peace is automatically ensured. So long as imperialism exists, there will always be, in the words of the Moscow Declaration of November 1957, "Soil for aggressive wars."

The danger of war is *not* over, but is on the contrary, *acute*. The danger of war remains and will continue to arise from the aggressive policy of imperialism. The preservation of peace depends on understanding that danger, on rousing and uniting all the forces of peace against the imperialist threat of war whenever and wherever it arises.

It depends on the systematic exposure of the danger of war—the Berlin crisis, the U.S. hydrogen bomb flights, U-2 provocation, imperialist intrigues in the Far East and in Africa, etc.,—on rousing the masses for action on each crisis and issue, and at the same time underlining the necessity of carrying that action beyond the immediate averting of the particular crisis to a lasting policy to lessen tension and reach long term agreement on abolition of nuclear weapons, disarmament, on the solution of the Berlin problem, on a European security Pact, and so on.

That is why it is impossible to envisage peaceful coexistence without, at the same time, organising and strengthening in every way, the fight to preserve peace. And this, precisely, has been the policy of the Communist Party.

But the new international situation and world relation of forces does mean that we can say with confidence that the forces for peace have now such a strength that they have every possibility of preventing the outbreak of a new world war. This is a confident conception based on the *facts*

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of the international situation. And this confident conception of the possibility of the maintenance of peace is itself, when understood, a *powerful influence for peace*. When they grip the masses, ideas become themselves a material force.

The preaching of the inevitability of war, in a situation that no longer warrants it, is a source of paralysis and passivity, and helps the forces of war. The confident conception of the possibility of peaceful co-existence is itself the greatest spur towards the further strengthening of the peace movement in each country, and of a united world movement for peace.

Some Problems of Peaceful Co-existence

In the course of the discussions on *The British Road to Socialism* some misconceptions on the idea of peaceful co-existence have had to be cleared away, some doubts and misgivings on the conception that war is no longer inevitable.

Some comrades argued that the conception of peaceful co-existence meant the ending of class war and was therefore unthinkable. But peaceful co-existence between capitalist and socialist *states* does not in any sense imply class conciliation between capitalism and the working class or working people *within* capitalist states. On the contrary! The drive to war comes from the reactionary monopolist groups within the capitalist states. More than ever in Britain, as in other imperialist countries, these groups have to be opposed by the working class and its allies not only in the fight on wages, hours, social progress and democracy, but on the issues of peace and disarmament. The belief in the possibility of peace implies a prolonged *struggle for peace* in all imperialist countries against *their own* imperialist forces for war. The greater the struggle of the working class and its allies against the monopolists the greater the guarantee of peace.

It is the same on the question of the ideological struggle. The conception of peaceful co-existence between the capitalist and socialist states does not in any sense mean an abating of the ideological struggle between capitalism and socialism or between the forces for war and the forces of peace. On the contrary! The conception of peaceful co-existence involves a ceaseless battle against militarist and aggressive ideas by the widest circles of Socialists and non-Socialists, and does not in any sense diminish the need to fight for socialist ideas.

The struggle between the socialist and capitalist systems is itself a form of the class struggle waged on an international plane. But the point is that whilst reactionary imperialist circles seek to wage the struggle in the form of war, the international Communist movement and the socialist states believe that this struggle should be conducted in the form of peaceful economic and cultural competition, and not by nuclear war with its horrors of destruction.

Not the "Status Quo"

Some of those who misunderstood the conception of peaceful co-existence argued that it was an attempt, as it were, to "freeze" the *status quo*, to preserve "things as they are", to perpetuate a capitalist system alongside the socialist sector of the world.

But it was never, and never can be, the aim of Communists to "export" socialism by force, to spread socialism throughout the world against the will of the peoples of the different countries. It is imperialism that constantly preaches and practises intervention. Communists have always taught that socialism cannot be imposed from above, from outside, that it must be established by the working people led by the working class in each individual country, that each people will establish socialism in their own country, at their own time, and in their own way.

Socialist countries can influence other people to move to socialism by the strength of their example; they can help to protect countries that are building socialism from capitalist intervention; they can help by trade, by loans and by credits, but *not* by any form of imposition of socialist ideas or socialist regime.

Peaceful competition is the main way in which Socialists hope to show the superiority of the socialist over the capitalist system. Manuilsky expressed it at the Seventh World Conference of the Communist International in 1935:

> "The U.S.S.R. needs no foreign wars for the purpose of transforming the world. The peoples themselves will rise against their oppressors and do that. The U.S.S.R. needs no wars because in the competition between the two world systems it is the system of socialism that is winning every day, for it shows the world its superiority over the capitalist system."

But the conception of peaceful co-existence does *not* imply belief in the perpetuation of capitalism. Communists are quite confident that step by step, in country after country, the people will take the path to socialism, that in country after country, the mass of the working people led by the industrial working class will win political power and begin to construct socialism. Socialism has triumphed first in one-sixth and now in one-third of the world, and its triumph will, step by step, extend to two-thirds and then to the whole of the world. The victory of socialism in the whole world will end for all time the problem of peace or war.

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War will become a museum piece, a strange phenomenon of the past, difficult to explain to the children of future generations.

But Communists seek to achieve the victory of world socialism not by the "export of socialism" by violent means, and above all, *not by war.*

We wish to live to see socialism, we do not wish to build socialism amidst a mass of death, destruction and radio-active ruins. And, therefore, in the whole period of world transition to socialism, during which the people in each country in their own way move forward to socialism, the preservation of world peace is the *major preoccupation,* the central strategic task, the central question for Communists in all countries. It is not a manoeuvre, a gimmick, a passing transitory tactic, but the central uniting task of all peoples throughout the whole epoch of world transition to socialism.

Some people have quite falsely argued that the conception of peaceful co-existence is a departure from Leninism. But the Soviet Union, right from the very beginning, has stood for and acted for peaceful co-existence—during Lenin's lifetime and after Lenin's death. To a correspondent of the *New York Evening Journal,* on February 18th, 1920, Lenin said: "Our plans in Asia? The same as in Europe: peaceful co-existence with the peoples, with the workers and peasants of all nations."

Asked what obstacles stood in the way of peaceful relations of the Soviet Union and the capitalist countries, he replied that from the Soviet side there were *none*: the obstacles consisted of "imperialism from the side of the American (as of any other) capitalists."

In the period preceding the Geneva Conference of 1922, Lenin developed his ideas of peaceful competition as the "rivalry of the two methods, two formations, two kinds of economy—communist and capitalist. We shall prove," he continued, "that we are the stronger. Of course, the task is a difficult one, but we have said and continue to say that socialism has the power of example. Force is of avail in relation to those who want to restore their power. But that exhausts the value of force, and after that only influence and example are of avail. We must demonstrate the importance of Communism practically, by example." [*Collected Works* (Russian) Vol. 31, p. 426]

Consistent Soviet Policy

The Soviet Union, from the first Decree on Peace through the great struggles for collective security right until the present proposals for general and complete disarmament, has always, and consistently, struggled for peaceful coexistence, to solve the problems between capitalist and socialist nations *without war.*

The point is that when there was a single world-embracing system of imperialism, before October 1917, there was no force strong enough to prevent imperialist war. With the October Revolution, the Soviet Union immensely strengthened the capacity of the peace forces for prevention of war, but so long as the Soviet Union stood alone, as the only socialist state, it was not yet, *despite its efforts,* strong enough to resist the war drive of imperialism assisted by the splitting forces of reformism in the working class movement. But now, with the immense new strength of the forces of peace, the qualitatively new relation of world class forces, peaceful coexistence has become a practical possibility.

Some comrades would like to see a *smooth and easy development* throughout the world of peaceful coexistence in the form of peaceful trade, cultural exchange, relations of every type between the countries of capitalism and socialism. But the path of peaceful existence is not likely to be a smooth and easy one. Of course the fight will continue to lift the level, to improve the character of peaceful coexistence, from the bare non-existence of war to the higher level of peaceful friendly economic and cultural exchange, regular meetings at the Summit. But whilst some capitalists, more sober-minded, will come to see the necessity of peaceful coexistence, others will become more desperate with the success of socialism. Different capitalist governments will succeed one another in different capitalist countries, some more geared to a policy of war, some, under mass pressure, more inclined to peaceful negotiation. That is why the struggle for peaceful coexistence is not likely to be either smooth or easy, why there will be periods of success and periods of difficulty, why strong nerves and constant vigilance are necessary, why great firmness and refusal of appeasement has to be combined with concession and negotiation.

When the recent Summit talks were wrecked by U.S. imperialism, some thought this was "the end of everything", the end of any hope of peaceful coexistence. But in fact the position of imperialism did not improve, and since the wrecking of the Summit new peace forces have appeared in Japan, Korea and Cuba; and the whole issue of negotiation is arising again. The battle for peaceful coexistence will be a long-term battle that is ended only with the victory of world socialism, or at least the victory of socialism on the greater part of the territory of the world.

Some people would like to believe in the conception of peaceful coexistence, but still have doubts of its practicability. But life has already, again and

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again in the last ten years, shown that it is practicable. A war *was* stopped in Korea. Dulles *was* prevented from turning the war in Viet Nam into a world nuclear conflict and the war *was* stopped. The war in Suez, the British-Franco-Israel aggression in Egypt, *was* terminated. The three main protagonists of the forces of peace acted here in unison—the national liberation movement of the Arab and other peoples; the peace movement in Britain, France and Israel; the warnings of the socialist countries. The strength of the forces of peace *prevented* the threatened imperialist aggression on the Iraqi revolution. There has as yet been no military aggression against Cuba from the side of imperialism. Life itself demonstrates again and again the *new* capacity of the forces of peace to prevent war, the *new* relation of class forces in the world, the *new* possibilities of peaceful coexistence.

Imperialism has not changed its character. The drive to war and the danger of war will continue to exist so long as imperialism is a considerable force within the world. But in the new world situation a practical possibility exists of maintaining the peaceful coexistence of the socialist and capitalist systems, until such time as the victory of world socialism solves for all time the problem of war.

Communists see that it is in the interests of the whole of humanity that peace should be preserved. They set themselves the task of achieving world socialism, not through a nuclear holocaust, but on a background of world peace. They are prepared to unite with all sincere people of every country and class in the fight for peace, but they know that, in the last analysis, the leading force must be that of the working class.

Transition to Socialism

How far does the qualitatively new character of the present epoch affect the form of transition to socialism in different capitalist countries, and, in particular, in Britain? Marxists have never considered that the road to socialism will be identical in all countries, or that all countries will, in the advance to socialism, follow the "pattern" of the Soviet Union.

Lenin often stressed that different countries will adopt different forms of advance to socialism:

> "All countries will come to socialism, this is inevitable, but they will not all reach it in the same way; every one will contribute its specific nature in one or another form of democracy, in one or another variant of the dictatorship of the proletariat, in one or another tempo in the socialisation of the various aspects of social life." [*Collected Works* (English) Vol. 19, pp. 256-257].

The British Road to Socialism was first prepared, ten years ago, on the understanding that it was necessary to show to the British people the most favourable path to socialism in the context of the new relation of world forces, and the new possibilities that arose from it.

It is essential here to make a clear distinction between the fundamental principles that are necessary for the successful advance to socialism at any time and in every country, and the differences that will arise in the *form* of the advance to socialism at different periods of history and in different countries.

What is Essential for the Advance to Socialism?

Both the Political Resolution of the Twenty-Fifth Congress of the British Communist Party (April 1957) and the Statement of the Communist Parties of the Twelve Socialist Countries (November 1957) emphasised that there are certain essential principles or laws that govern the socialist revolution and the advance to socialism, but that these principles must be applied in accordance with the specific conditions in each particular country. The Resolution of the Twenty-Fifth Congress of our Party stated:

> "While the advance of socialism must have special features in accordance with the conditions in each country, there are certain essential features which apply to all countries."

It is impossible in any country, at any period, to advance successfully to socialism without a socialist revolution, i.e. the passing of political power into the hands of the working class leading its allies from the working people, for the purpose of ending capitalism (imperialism) and building socialism.

But it is not enough to *win* political power. For a whole historical period of society, in which, step by step, capitalism is ended and socialism established, power has to be *held* and *used* to defend the revolution and to build socialism. The dictatorship of the capitalist minority is replaced by the rule of the working class allied with the great majority of the people, that Marx called the *dictatorship of the proletariat.*

The advance to socialism cannot be achieved except under the leadership of the working class, but whilst *only* the working class can lead, the advance cannot be one of the working class *alone.* The working class in its fight against capitalism and for socialism needs allies from the working people.

It is impossible to envisage the successful advance to socialism in any country without proletarian internationalism, international working-class solidarity. And, finally, without a Communist Party basing itself on the theoretical principles of

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Marxism-Leninism, playing a leading role, no successful advance to socialism can be envisaged.

But it is not enough to understand in the *abstract,* in generalised form, the essential conditions for successful advance to socialism. Communist leadership means the application of the general principles to particular conditions. The preparation of *The British Road to Socialism* was such an endeavour.

Forms of Advance to Socialism

The *form* of advance to socialism in different countries changes according to the particular conditions which face the people at a particular time. What are the main factors that have to be considered?

The forms of advance to socialism change (1) according to the international relation of class forces at a given time (2) according to the relation of class forces *within* the particular country at that time and (3) according to the specific customs, traditions, institutions etc., that have developed in that particular country.

Is it not clear that the *new* international relation of class forces in this *new* epoch of transition to socialism in the world, will have an effect on the forms of transition to socialism in particular countries?

The effect is twofold. Within imperialism, ever more restricted by the growing socialist system, the general crisis deepens. Imperialism is weakened, it attacks all sections of the people—not only the working class, but the peasantry, town petty-bourgeoisie, intellectual and professional people, even the smaller capitalists. Imperialism becomes more reactionary. It tends, more and more, not only to attack the living standards of the people, but to attack the limited democratic rights that the working people have won within capitalism, to renounce national sovereignty, to reject and run against all that is best and most progressive in its own cultural heritage. It becomes identified with a policy and strategy of nuclear war.

In this situation, more and more clearly, the working class stands forth as the truly progressive force of each nation, the leader in the defence of peace, national sovereignty, liberty and democracy, the cultural heritage. Opportunties arise, in a way that did not previously exist to the same extent, of developing a broad political alliance around the working class for peace, democracy, independence, living standards and cultural progress. At the same time the ideas of socialism gain ground amongst the working people.

Externally the rise and strengthening of the socialist countries exercises a growing moral and ideological influence amongst the peoples of the capitalist countries. Moreover, the stronger the socialist camp, the more opportunity there is for preventing imperialist interventions against countries that take the socialist road, the more opportunity exists for giving economic and cultural aid to the peoples building socialism. Imperialism is no longer able to threaten, blackmail and intervene in the old way.

The British Road

The conception of *The British Road to Socialism* was that, taking into account the new more favourable relation of class forces in the world and inside Britain, taking into account the specific traditions and institutions that have developed in Britain, it was now possible for the working class to win around itself a broad popular alliance to win political power, to win a Communist and genuine Socialist majority in Parliament, to transform the capitalist state into a state representative of the interests of the working people, and to build socialism in Britain, not without continuous class struggle, but without armed conflict.

A few years later the whole international communist movement confirmed the position taken up in the British Road. The Moscow (November 1957) statement of the Twelve Communist and Workers' Parties of the Socialist Countries declared:

> "Today in a number of capitalist countries the working class, headed by its vanguard, has the opportunity, given a united working class and popular front or other workable forms of agreement and political co-operation between the different parties and public organisations, to unite a majority of the people, win state power without civil war, and ensure the transfer of the basic means of production to the hands of the people. Relying on the majority of the people and decisively rebuffing the opportunist elements incapable of relinquishing the policy of compromise with the capitalists and landlords, the working class can defeat the reactionary, anti-popular forces, secure a firm majority in Parliament, transform Parliament from an instrument serving the class interests of the bourgeoisie into an instrument serving the working people, launch a non-Parliamentary mass struggle, smash the resistance of the reactionary forces and create the necessary conditions for peaceful realisation of the socialist revolution."

Neither *The British Road to Socialism* nor the Moscow statement proclaimed that such a peaceful road to socialism was inevitable. What they claimed was that new more favourable forms of advance to socialism were opening up.

Communists always, everywhere, looked for possibilities of peaceful advance to socialism. Violence is the product of imperialism, and *its* method of work. Working-class counter-violence was only accepted when no other course was available. It is

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well known that in 1917 Lenin and the Bolshevik Party twice looked for peaceful solutions for the advance of the Russian Revolution but such means at that time could not prove successful against the overwhelming strength of capitalism. But what in 1917 was a rare opportunity offering itself for a short moment in exceptional circumstances is, with the new relation of class forces, becoming more and more widespread. It is the *strength* of the working class movement and its allies that can compel the bourgeoisie in more and more frequent circumstances to refrain from violent methods of repressing the people's advance to socialism.

The Class Struggle

Some dogmatic critics of *The British Road to Socialism* have spoken of it as a reformist programme. But this is the opposite of the truth. The reformists in Britain and elsewhere stand for social advance through gradual piecemeal reform within the framework of capitalism and the capitalist State. They preach and practise the neutrality of the State, and in fact do everything to strengthen the monopoly capitalist State; they preach and practise class collaboration. In fact the modern right-wingers of the Gaitskell type have even withdrawn the *aim* of socialism, the socialist objective, and replaced it by a permanent vista of a mixed and managed economy.

The British Road to Socialism is a revolutionary programme. It stands for the winning of political power by the working class at the head of its allies; for the rule of the working class in the whole period of transition to a classless society; for a removal from the machinery of State of the representatives of capitalism, and their replacement by loyal representatives of the working class and people.

But above all *The British Road* is based on a conception of continuous class struggle. Struggle now, for peace, democracy, living standards. The uniting of the working class and working people in the course of the struggle; mass struggle as the basis from which emerges the possibility for a genuine socialist majority in Parliament; mass struggle to back up every measure undertaken by that majority in favour of socialism; and mass struggle to repel every counter-offensive by the capitalist class at home or abroad.

The possibility of a peaceful transition to socialism in Britain depends on the strength of the working class, its unity, its clarity of socialist aim; the winning of a broad popular alliance around the working class; and the continuous class struggle led by the working class and its Communist Party. It is made quite clear in *The British Road* that if the ruling class should attempt to repel by violent means the people's democratically-decided advance to socialism then the British people, led by the working class, will take the necessary means to repel *them*.

The conception of the peaceful road to socialism, like the conception of peaceful coexistence, is one of the people led by the working class *imposing* their will on the imperialists. It is a conception based on the new strength of the working class in the international situation.

Against False Conceptions

Communists in Britain, as in other countries, tracing out the paths of advance to socialism arising in the new world conditions, find it necessary to reject two main lines of false approach—the right wing, reformist and revisionist, and the leftist or dogmatic.

Reformists and revisionists tend to speak of the certainty of peace in the new conditions, or to proclaim that the advanced technique of nuclear destruction has made wars impossible. Dogmatists tend to proclaim that wars are still inevitable and that the new horrors of nuclear technique make no difference to the old outlook.

Communists have both to show that the danger of war *still* exists, that imperialism *still* drives to war, that the new techniques *alone* do not make war impossible. But at the same time, they are not in any way indifferent to the horrors of nuclear destruction; they are determined to do everything conceivably possible to avoid a nuclear holocaust, and they are confident that the new strength of the forces of peace, if united and active, can impose peace on the forces of war.

Reformists and revisionists shut their eyes to the necessary working-class and socialist leadership of the peace movement. Leftists and dogmatists shut their eyes to the importance of the broad peace alliance. Communists see both the need of working-class and socialist leadership and of the broad peace movement.

Reformists and revisionists tend to reject the essentials necessary for successful advance to socialism. They reject the necessary socialist revolution, the necessity of the dictatorship of the proletariat, of international working-class solidarity, of the leadership of the working class and above all of continuous class struggle and the role of the Communist Party. Leftists and dogmatists tend to close their eyes to the new possibilities of advance to socialism, the breadth of the alliance that can be achieved, the utilisation of Parliament, the capacity of a strong working class at the head of a broad popular alliance to impel the capitalists to refrain from taking violent measures against the advance to socialism.

The reformists and revisionists tend to under-

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estimate the strength of imperialism, the leftists and dogmatists to underestimate the new strength of the forces of socialism and the new possibilities that exist for peaceful coexistence and peaceful transition to socialism.

Both false theories lead to the same end—the paralysis of the fighting will of the mass of the people. Both reinforce each other and lead to passivity.

On the Tenth Anniversary

The ten years that have followed the first preparation of *The British Road to Socialism* have been a brilliant confirmation of the premises and principles on which it was based.

These ten years have seen the further strengthening of the forces of socialism and peace, a further weakening of imperialism, a giant step forward in the national liberation movement. The character of the present epoch as an epoch of disintegrating capitalism and of world transition to socialism has been more fully established.

Can it be said that the publication of *The British Road* has helped to encourage illusions or to minimise the danger of war, or to diminish the understanding of the reactionary character of imperialism? On the contrary, the Party has punched home the lesson that each and every partial struggle is part of a wider struggle for peaceful coexistence and for peaceful transition to socialism. The fight for peace in the last ten years has become a major issue in Britain; a great inspiring broad movement has emerged in the struggle for peace. At the same time the militant section of the Labour movement has decisively defeated the attempts of Gaitskell and the right-wing reformists to remove the objective of socialism from the Labour Party constitution.

It is folly to proclaim that the understanding of the present epoch, of the greatly weakened position of imperialism and the greatly strengthened position of the forces of the working class, weakens or disarms the working class and the people. On the contrary, the understanding of the new forces and the new possibilities inspires them to greater and more militant action.

The understanding that in the present situation it is the socialist forces and not the forces of imperialism that can determine the course of events inspires the working class and all working people with a new confidence.

The understanding of the new possibilities of peaceful coexistence and peaceful transition to socialism have themselves become important factors in developing the struggle for peace and for socialism. As Marx put it, ideas, when they grip the masses, become themselves a material force.

Intellectuals and the Changing World: New Opportunities for Marxist Ideas

Important Discussion Meeting

at Friends House, Euston Road, London, on Friday, October 7th, 1960 at 7.30 p.m.

Contributions to the discussion by ARNOLD KETTLE, JOHN MAHON, JOHN GOLLAN.

Chair: SAM AARONOVITCH

Admission by Communist Party card and ticket (6d.) from London District Committee, Communist Party, 75 Farringdon Road, E.C.1.

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How new is the "New Left"?

Arnold Kettle

THERE has been in the last few years, and especially since the General Election of 1959, a certain Leftward tendency among British intellectuals and especially among students and other young people. It would be an exaggeration to call this tendency a movement for it is in most respects rather vague and unco-ordinated, tentative rather than decided. It involves a number of impulses, not always consistent and not always recognised as consistent when they actually are, of which the most important are undoubtedly hatred and disgust at the whole idea of H-bombs and nuclear warfare and a sense, varying a great deal in its emphases and diagnoses, that mid-twentieth-century British society is at best unsatisfactory and frustrating and at worst hypocritical and corrupt.

The most striking expression of the tendencies under consideration has been, of course, the wide and enthusiastic participation of progressive middle-class people, and particularly students and young people, in the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament and the Aldermaston marches. But it is not only in the fight against the H-bomb that there has been important activity. Over Suez, over the repression in Nyasaland, over Cyprus and over the Apartheid issue in South Africa it has been quite clear that this Left impulse was not a matter of mere talk and idealistic dreaming. Even in the thirties, when the anti-fascist movement was so strong among students, there were not larger student political demonstrations than those of the last few years. And it is not without significance that the key-points of such demonstrations have been most often no longer Oxford and Cambridge but the provincial universities and London. It is a change which corresponds with the shift from the Hons and Rebels of the thirties—the well-to-do, public-school and often thoroughly bourgeois young intellectuals who moved towards and sometimes even into the Communist Party—to the Angry young Jimmy Porters of Red Brick.

If the political emphases of this tendency centre on the struggle for nuclear disarmament and support for the aspirations of the colonial peoples, attitudes to internal British questions are a good deal less clear and positive. Except on such issues as the need to abolish the death penalty and to alter the laws about homosexuality it is doubtful if one would find unanimity on any questions of internal political policy among an average group of nuclear disarmament demonstrators, though probably most of them would say, if pressed, that they are Socialists. This is, of course, due to a considerable extent to the position of the Labour Party which offers very little leadership of a sort calculated to win the enthusiasm of aspiring young people or radical intellectuals. But simply to blame the Labour Party is neither here nor there: the Labour Party in the thirties gave no more progressive a lead than it does today, yet the Leftward impulse among the middle class at that time was a good deal more consciously socialist and politically realistic than the present tendencies: the difference basically is that the petty-bourgeois Left* of 1960 has passed through the politically demoralising period of the failure of the Labour Government and the rigours of the anti-Communist Cold War, and is as a result a good deal further away from the working-class movement in general and the Communist Party in particular than the anti-fascist intellectuals of the previous generation had been.

One of the most noticeable features of the Left tendency under consideration is that, as far as Britain itself is concerned, much of its manifestation takes a "cultural" rather than a directly political form. Indeed, there is a strong anti-political, and especially anti-political-party flavour about much current Left feeling. When the student Left in the thirties began to achieve considerable strength and inaugurated a great deal of political activity the Socialist Clubs hit on the idea of acquiring club-rooms and snack-bars which could help hold their membership together. Interestingly, in the present period the coffee-bars have tended to come *before* the political activity: it would not be fair to say that they are seen as an end in themselves, yet there is something of that about them. You get your coffee-bar and then begin thinking of things to discuss. Again, though the thirties had their Audens and Malraux and Clifford Odets, the key reading of members of the Left Book Club was the work of Strachey (then on the Marxist side), Dutt, the Webbs and books like *Red Star over China* and *The Socialist Sixth of the World*. Today I doubt whether there is a

* I should make clear that I use the word Left in this article in relation to the progressive movement, not in relation to the Tories. In other words I do not include the Right-wing Labour leaders, however petty-bourgeois, among the petty-bourgeois Left. It is petty-bourgeois tendencies within the progressive Left-wing that I am concerned with.

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single contemporary political book of any kind really widely read among Left intellectuals. Galbraith and Wright Mills are much quoted but I do not think they are much read. But Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* is widely read, so are the novels of John Braine and the plays of John Osborne (which are of course also films). And a Left-wing student is more likely to be keen on Colin MacInnes and Arnold Wesker than about any directly political work.

Two points are worth making about this situation. One is that it ties in with C. P. Snow's pertinent observations about the separation of science from literary culture in our society. The articulate intellectual Left in Britain today is almost exclusively "literary" rather than scientific. I do not mean, of course, that no scientists march from Aldermaston or that there are no Left-wing scientists. I mean that the atmosphere of the petty-bourgeois Left has, by and large, the characteristics of the literary intelligentsia, with its special tendencies towards anarchic individualism, love of self-expression (to the point quite often of exhibitionism), ignorance and near-contempt of science and general preference for living in a world of "ideas" and "values" rather than practical action. The effect of this is to deter a good many scientists and "non-literary" folk from participation in Left-wing politics and thereby deny to the intellectual Left influences which would tend to make it a bit more down-to-earth and realistic. In the second place, it has to be said that a concern for culture, when divorced from a sharp sense of the class basis of values, is not, especially in a period when class struggle is so intense and critical as in the world of the 1960's, an adequate substitute for a concern for politics and can very easily become a rather insidious form of self-indulgence.

The Petty-Bourgeois Left

It is important to estimate justly the significance of the petty-bourgeois Left, for it is easy either to despise or idealise it.

To despise it is not only to be, from a communist point of view, sectarian but to shut one's eyes to the actual achievements of the middle-class sections of the peace movement, which are greater in Britain than perhaps anywhere else except Japan in the capitalist world, and to the potentialities of aspiring young people in general. The Leftward impulse of young people, even when it takes forms we don't find sympathetic, is a healthy impulse, a fine impulse; and it will take *contemporary* forms, not the forms of the thirties or the forties or even the fifties. I think we should recognise that there is an element of sheer stick-in-the-muddiness about the attitude of some middle-aged members (the old are much wiser) of the working-class movement towards the clothes and music and social habits of young people—including working-class lads and girls.

At the same time the suspicion which often exists among the Labour movement people of the goings-on of the youth is not just a matter of the clash of generations or the conservatism of a pack of squares. It also involves something deeply important: a doubt about the class basis of the sort of political and social activity that most easily attracts up-and-coming young people. The important question isn't "Should young workers wear tight jeans or like juke-boxes or sit in espresso coffee-bars?": the important question is "Do the political actions and forms of activity young people go in for strengthen their class-consciousness, or do they rather encourage individualist, anarchistic, non-working-class attitudes?" And you can't, if you are a serious Socialist, simply laugh this question off by pretending that people who ask it are old fogies who haven't caught up with modern ideas.

Mass Political Activity

Obviously it is not a black-and-white question. Mass political activity for progressive demands is good in itself and strengthens in essential ways those who take part in it whatever their motives. The Aldermaston marches are not, in any case, demonstrations of class against class; they are demonstrations of a wide alliance of almost every section of the people against national betra al and racial suicide. And the solidarity they engender among those who take part in them and watch them and read about them is something of great value, in addition to the importance of the particular demands they express. And to the extent that the working-class movement participates in such demonstrations to that extent will the less "committed" sympathisers come to find that their solidarity against the Bomb involves a particular sense of solidarity with the working-class movement. It is always false to draw a hard and fast line which separates "progressive demands" from "working-class demands".

All the same, though it is wrong and sectarian to despise the petty-bourgeois Left and fail to try to get the maximum unity with it, it is also wrong and dangerous not to recognise that the petty-bourgeois Left *is* petty-bourgeois. The basis of necessary unity is not the drawing of a veil over such differences but the recognition that united action is mutually helpful. And of course, once again, nothing is morally black-and-white or politically static. People's ideas change, develop, enlarge, especially when they become involved in

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action. Petty-bourgeois attitudes are not, like Original Sin, something you can't escape. People, particularly young people, shed their illusions in the course of struggle, especially if their personal class background and way of life is conducive anyway to such a change. But, again, they do not shed them automatically. Young workers and students who become involved in politics through the petty-bourgeois Left lose their petty-bourgeois illusions to the extent that they come up against working-class leadership, working-class ideas, people who see life from the point of view of the class-conscious workers. Communists who sit waiting in the Party office for young people to come to them for enlightenment have only themselves to blame if the young people prefer the sort of enlightenment they get from the professional coffee-bar intellectuals. At least it is accompanied by coffee and pops.

The petty-bourgeois Left does not, of course, recognise that it is petty-bourgeois and this indeed is one of the characteristics that distinguishes it; if it recognised this feature of itself it would be well on the way to being different.

The Petty-Bourgeois Outlook

Marxists use the term petty-bourgeois Left to describe that section of the Left movement whose Left ideas and attitudes are strongly flavoured by the characteristics of the petty-bourgeoisie as a class. By petty-bourgeoisie is meant, strictly, small capitalists, small independent producers, who are not the *dominant* class in latter-day bourgeois society, these being the big industrial and finance capitalists, the monopolists. The petty-bourgeois are at once hostile to the monopolists, who tend all the time to buy them out or do them down, and yet bound up with capitalism as a system, and their ideas are essentially bourgeois in the sense of being strongly individualist (as opposed to an emphasis on co-operation and solidarity). It is a characteristic therefore of petty-bourgeois ideology that it is at once critical—up to a certain point—of capitalism and yet limited in its range by bourgeois preconceptions. Very interestingly, petty-bourgeois ideology has in twentieth-century Britain an importance quite disproportionate to the actual economic and political importance of the petty-bourgeoisie as a class and, indeed, I think it would be true to say that it is not among the petty-bourgeoisie as a class that petty-bourgeois ideology is most prevalent. Most of the theoreticians of the petty-bourgeois position, most of the more articulate purveyors of petty-bourgeois ideas are, as a matter of fact, technically speaking, members of the working-class, men and women who own nothing but perhaps their own houses and possibly a few shares and who live by selling their labour, generally mental rather than manual.

Why is this? How does it come about that ideas and attitudes which are at bottom those of small producers in an economic system which in fact stifles small producers, should be so widespread and powerful as to be the intellectual driving-force of hundreds of thousands of people who are not themselves small producers at all?

Working-Class Ideas

It comes about, of course, because British society today is a class society in which there is both a ruling class and a class struggle. The ruling class, the monopolists, have power; but they do not have absolute power. To maintain their basic power, their control of the productive forces, their ability to make profits they are forced continuously to make concessions, economic, political, cultural. And the society which they rule is, as a result, by no means their ideal bourgeois society (which could indeed by its very nature, its competitiveness, its ultimate dependence on a "market" over which they have incomplete control, never actually exist) but the best they can settle for. But neither, for that matter, is it the ideal society of the workers, their major class antagonists. The working class, in so far as it becomes aware of its class position and potentialities, knows perfectly well that a far more satisfactory society—a classless society—is possible, and on this basis it creates, with great difficulty because it is not yet a ruling class, its own system of ideas, its own conscious values and ethics, its own philosophy which will serve its basic needs and historic potentiality. These are working-class ideas and since, even in England where home is a castle and ideas do not spread easily, different sections of society cannot be insulated from each other, working-class ideas spread and take possession of the minds of men and women who are not industrial workers at all but who share with the workers the impulses of fundamental social change.

But working-class ideas can only gradually, and with difficulty, spread, for every conscious and unconscious pressure of a society dominated by a privileged ruling group works against them. And so a rather bizarre situation comes about. Just as the capitalist class is forced, against its will yet always making the best of every concession and claiming credit for it, to pay higher wages than it wants to, maintain better social services than it wants to, and permit democratic rights and liberties which its theoreticians always condemn in advance as the thin end of the wedge of social collapse; so does it make the best of each necessary change ideologically, adopting, with a

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hypocrisy so complete as to exact a grudging admiration, slogans which a generation earlier it would have condemned as treason (Imagine Mr. Macmillan's predecessors on the need for African independence!).

Balance of Class Forces

The ruling class is only too conscious, however, that such democratic concessions, though necessary, are highly dangerous. It does not, except for propaganda purposes, idealise the situation. The only people who, in fact, feel any deep inclination to idealise bourgeois democracy are the middle class—that area of the population which may, technically, belong to the working class or to some section of the owning class, but which, without having any share in the control of the country, enjoys certain privileges of income and status. This seems to me the key to the importance of petty-bourgeois ideas in present-day Britain. They are the ideas of those whom the balance of class forces in the present stage of class struggle in Britain happen to suit pretty well, simply because it *is* a balance. The middle class may not, in its own consciousness, have much of a future, but it has a considerable stake in the present and though it may feel itself in certain respects crushed between the two major classes it also sees itself as, in the short run at least, sitting pretty, with the workers strong enough to hold off the grimmer aspects of bourgeois dictatorship, and the capitalist class, morally tarnished though it may be, preventing the achievement of working-class power.

The capitalist class and the working class—as classes—have no such illusions about the *status quo*: they know that balances are temporary and that there is a struggle for power going on. But the middle class fears even to face such a reality. Everything becomes veiled in an idealism which is seen by its addicts as a superior sensibility but is in reality a reflection of the lack of solid material basis to their class position. Middle-class intellectuals are not the only people in the world whose class position can be described as falling between two stools: their peculiarity is that they manage to turn this somewhat ignominious position into a symbol of moral superiority.

Petty-Bourgeois Intellectuals

The petty-bourgeois intellectual, drawn in both directions, hates the obviously humanly indefensible aspects of capitalist-class policy—the cynical drift to war, the oppression of colonial peoples, the colour bar, the pompous and anachronistic Establishment—but remains essentially a bourgeois-democrat, with his ideas of freedom determined by the gift of irresponsibility that the capitalist class has made to petty-bourgeois intellectuals to prevent them from becoming working-class intellectuals. Here, it seems to me, the concept of "Opposition" within the capitalist system is of particular importance. It is a godsend, not so much to the capitalist class (except in the sense that it effectively holds off something worse) nor to the working class, who know that no amount of Opposition is in the end an alternative to having power, but to the middle class, especially to careerist politicians, whose security of tenure is thus assured, and to the intellectuals who are able to combine the luxury (well exemplified by the *New Statesman*) of being eternally in the right without the obligation of ever actually being responsible for anything.

To speak, then, of the petty-bourgeois Left is by no means to fling around a cheap and vague term of abuse or denigration, but to refer to a relatively precise and certainly discussable phenomenon. The petty-bourgeois Left is that section of the genuine Left (i.e. of the movement for radical social change) that wants radical political action and is socialist (as opposed to liberal-reformist) but is held back from effective revolutionary action or theory by the prevalence, and often dominance, of petty-bourgeois ideas of which the most important are, perhaps, individualism (as opposed to class solidarity), irresponsibility (a failure to consider ideas and action in terms of their consequences in reality—a reflection of the petty-bourgeois' position between two major contending decisive classes), and lack of a basic confidence in the working class.

Alongside these tendencies should be recognised I think, a general predisposition to see everything in somewhat idealist terms, a tendency all the stronger among the intellectuals, with whom it amounts almost to a vocational disease, on account of the separation of mental from manual activity with its consequence of giving theory or ideas or a subjective version of integrity a moral priority over practice and action. It is in this context that "expediency" easily becomes a dirty word.

Two points, at this stage, should be made clear: (1) The term petty-bourgeois refers in this whole context to the class basis of certain ideas and attitudes, not to the social origin or current class position of the people who hold such ideas. (2) I am not suggesting that between the petty-bourgeois Left and the working-class Left there is some sort of complete and absolute division, let alone gulf. Neither ideas nor people are so pure as all that. Very few class-conscious workers are unaffected by petty-bourgeois thinking and all petty bourgeois Left-wingers are influenced to some extent by

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working-class ideas. The distinction therefore, which is none the less valid for not being entirely clear-cut, is between those whose *dominant* tendencies bear the stamp of petty-bourgeois ideology and those whose *dominant* approach is a working class one. To recognise this is to recognise the need both for a certain humility and a good deal of flexibility as well as for a firm stand on matters of basic class principle.

The "New Left" Grouping

It is in relation to this general phenomenon of an increasing impulse Leftwards of people whose basic thinking and approaches remain petty-bourgeois that one should consider the role of the "New Left" grouping which publishes *New Left Review* and through this and a number of Left Clubs of varying composition and nature up and down the country seeks to give leadership to people feeling their way towards the Left.

Four numbers of *New Left Review* have now come out and the group has also published a symposium entitled *Out of Apathy* and some sort of assessment of its political *rôle* and potential is now possible. Two facts seem already quite clear: (1) that the appeal of the *Review* is limited in practice and presumably in intention to middle-class professional people and students, and (2) that, whereas in earlier days the "New Left" presented itself as a kind of forum or platform for numerous tendencies, it now appears as—given the somewhat individualistic nature of its components—a comparatively homogeneous tendency. Although not averse to an occasional (no doubt Platonic) flirtation with Trotskyism, the "New Left" no longer regards itself as a Marxist grouping (even of a Revisionist sort). It has a comparatively consistent and predictable political line of its own.

There is a good deal of rather self-conscious emphasis on the "New" in the "New Left" publications. What much of this amounts to on analysis is a way of writing which conscientiously avoids most Marxist jargon in favour of that of American bourgeois sociology. There are few mentions of "bourgeois" or "superstructure" or "self-criticism" but this lack is more than made up for by the reiteration of "countervailing", "dynamic" (as a noun), "image", "myth" and a score more. "If the image power must be remade at the base, it must also be remade at the top" begins a paragraph which accuses the Labour Party of concealing "concepts of power . . . within the cloudy metaphors of rhetoric". What this first sentence means I still (after reading *Out of Apathy*) have no precise idea, no doubt because the thought (sorry, concept) is too new for me. But seriously, it is hard to see what good is achieved by eschewing a jargon that is at least precise and meaningful in favour of one that is vague and misleading as well as ugly.

What is New?

What in fact, on the basis of their pronouncements and activity, is new about the "New Left"?

The view that capitalism is still with us and, far from becoming less so, is in fact more monopolist than ever? Scarcely; for this has been the view put forward by the Communist Party all along.

The view that the existence of H-bombs forms the greatest single threat to humanity, that Britain should never have begun manufacturing them and should stop doing so, that the whole nuclear strategy to which both the Tory and Labour Parties are committed is either fatuous or suicidal and in either case wicked? Scarcely; for this too is and has all along been the view of the Communist Party.

The view that the struggle for socialism needs to be fought on every front—including that of winning the middle-class—and that parliamentary struggle needs to be combined with the building and support of mass movements of the people in every sphere? Scarcely; for this is precisely the view put forward in *The British Road to Socialism*.

Obviously on these fundamental questions no *new* thoughts are being offered. What then is new about the policy of the "New Left"? I think it might fairly be said that the following constitute the principal ways in which their policy and emphases diverge from that of the Communist Party.

Playing Down Exploitation

(1) A tendency in economic analysis to play down the question of *exploitation*. I do not mean that the existence of exploitation or profits is denied; but that it is not given the key emphasis it should have, partly perhaps because it is felt not to be sufficiently "new". Ralph Samuel in *Out of Apathy* is admirable on the *structure* of contemporary capitalism but pays relatively little attention to the actual increases in profits. Now this is a key question not merely for general propaganda purposes but for the whole of present socialist strategy. It means for instance that the struggle for higher wages is fundamental, not incidental. The alternative to the "politics of hunger" is not to switch over, as Ken Alexander implies, from "material" to "ethical" demands but to intensify

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the wage struggle on the basis of the present situation i.e. by exposing the increasing exploitation of the working class in a time of capitalist "prosperity" and what that involves. The truth is that this whole distinction between "material" and "ethical", which bedevils so much "New Left" thinking and leaves them wide open to reactionary idealist attacks (like those of J. M. Cameron on the Third Programme), is false. Exploitation is material *and* ethical; production is a material activity but the relations men enter into in the course of production are non-material, but the two cannot in practice be separated. What is "new" in the emhasis of Alexander is a failure to recognise this. "There need be no antithesis" he says "between material and ethical demands" and in the same breath *contrasts* the "material reforms" of the past with the "moral revolution" needed in the future. What is new here is the replacement of dialectical thinking by undialectical, the treating of material demands in a mechanistic way and a consequent banishing of ethics to the realms of idealism. And this tendency is, it has to be said, characteristic of "New Left" thinking as a whole. Again, I do not mean that Ken Alexander is opposed to wages struggle; obviously he isn't. What I do mean is that any worker managing to plough his way through *Out of Apathy* (an "image", it must be confessed, not readily springing to mind) would be less likely to be inspired to fight harder for higher wages than to feel that the wages-struggle is on the whole a bit irrelevant, not to say vulgar. As the reader of *Out of Apathy* is however infinitely more likely to be intellectual than an industrial worker this might be thought not to matter so much; actually it matters more, for whereas the facts of the life he leads are, in the case of the industrial worker, a pretty safe counteracting force to a playing down of material demands, the intellectual's vocational tendency to separate the ethical from the material will be strengthened, to the damage of both.

Negative Attitude

(2) A negative attitude to socialism where it actually exists, especially to the Soviet Union. The "New Left" writers, except perhaps the Trotskyite lunatic fringe, would no doubt deny that they are anti-Soviet, which in itself reveals their tendency to be less concerned with practice and effects than with ideas. They would say that they are all in favour of the achievements of the Soviet Union and only against the bad side. In practice, however, the Soviet Union is scarcely ever mentioned except in a negative sense. This is partly because of an attitude to Russia which is rather like the attitude of the Labour leaders to Nationalisation; it is seen as an electoral or polemical liability and therefore ignored as much as possible and the ignoring is in practice a gift to the Tories. There has not been a single serious article about either the Soviet Union or China in *New Left Review*. And in *Out of Apathy* the references to the Soviet Union are at best negative and more often hostile, a point which a review in (of all places) the *New Statesman* quite rightly drew attention to. When Peter Worsley in an article on imperialism which is throughout a disgracefully shoddy piece of work and manages to be confusing even about Suez (one of the issues that readers of *Out of Apathy* can almost be guaranteed to be clear about) talks of "the Russian attempt to manipulate colonial movements in the political or strategic interests of the Communist bloc" (no wonder the writer has become a regular book-reviewer for the Manchester *Guardian*), he is merely expressing more openly than usual the basic "New Left" attitude to Soviet socialism. What most of these writers seem not to be able to stomach is that a socialist country should have, not only principles and ideals, but also a strategy, a diplomacy, a defence policy—including, as long as need be, even H-bombs—and all the responsibilities and consequent impurities involved in being a great power. "Power politics" is nearly always used by the "New Left" writers in a simple derogatory sense as though there were some other form of politics.

Now what is involved here is not a matter of more or less enthusiasm about the Russian achievement. It is a basic refusal to come to terms with the facts of life as they affect Britain. You *cannot* formulate an independent British foreign policy except on the basis of a correct assessment as to who are the friends and who the enemies of the British people. You cannot argue effectively against the Right-wing opposition to an independent foreign policy unless you answer the Right-wing case—that communism is the menace. Russia an aggressive power. Similarly, on longer-term questions of the socialist future of Britain, it is as stupid and unrealistic to imagine that you can present an "image" of socialism to the British people which ignores or plays down what socialism is actually like in the places where it exists as it would be to give the impression that socialism in Britain will be indistinguishable from socialism in Russia or China.

The main reason, I believe, why the "New Left" refuses to face this problem realistically is that their thinking on the key question of the nature and basis of freedom remains essentially petty-bourgeois and individualistic. They accept, like any other Left social-democrats, an essentially idealist view of freedom which, though they do

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not realise it, is in fact a cloak for their desire as intellectuals to cling on to their present position of privilege and irresponsibility. And they do not realise this precisely because the unconscious class-basis of their thinking prevents them from recognising that they are in fact irresponsible, or, to put it another way, prevents them from having a view of responsibility that is not idealist.

Neutralist Outlook

(3) As will already have been gathered, the basis of "New Left" foreign policy is neutralism. I have not the space to discuss this fully. The main point, of course, is that while it is very welcome when capitalist states adopt a neutralist, as opposed to an imperialist, position, the only reason that they ever do so is the strength of the socialist movement, nationally and internationally, which is *not* neutralist. Obviously this situation could never arise if the Socialists themselves took a neutralist position. For the Socialists of one particular country to adopt such a position is in the long run unrealistic and in the short run simply opportunist. An article in the fourth number of *New Left Review* proposes that "Britain should be a focus and rallying-point *beyond* the power systems of East and West" [their italics]. What we have here under the guise of something "new" is the good old social-democratic dream of a reality *beyond* class struggle, a society which is neither capitalist nor socialist but simply nice.

Attitude to the State

(4) An ambiguous attitude to the state and the whole problem of social change. This is partly due to an attitude to politics which, to say the least, puts an exceptionally high premium on talk. The rather absurd joke embedded in *Out of Apathy*, which reviewers have not failed to see, that a book which claims on its dust-cover to be concerned with "a serious immediate policy" should on page 305 put the question "And *how* is this to be done? At this point a new volume should begin" is a fair enough indication of that attitude.

The ambiguous attitude towards the state was well indicated in the *New Statesman's* shrewd description of the authors of *Out of Apathy* as Fabian Revolutionaries. It is worth remembering that the original Fabians thought of themselves not as gradualists but revolutionaries and indeed chose their name as a tribute to the slogan of the Roman tribune who wanted root-and-branch as opposed to piecemeal change. What drove Bernard Shaw from the working-class Socialist League into the Fabian Society was not a decline in revolutionary socialist conviction but a belief that the Socialist League was sectarian, unrealistic and isolated and that there was more hope of making an impact—counteracting apathy—by concentrating on the middle-class intellectuals and hoping the Labour movement would be affected that way. I think the same is basically true of the "New Left", though whether they are likely to produce propagandists of the calibre of the Fabians seems doubtful.

All this is why the use of the word "Revolution" in *Out of Apathy* has the ring of empty rhetoric whereas the articles about actual conditions in the *New Left Review* are nearly always well-documented, well-written and useful. The underlying reason, perhaps, why Edward Thompson's contributions to *Out of Apathy* are so empty is that he can solemnly enumerate the pre-requisites for a socialist revolution and fail to mention the need for a revolutionary party. It is an omission, with all its implications, which will make every practical working-class politician who reads his work dismiss it simply as not serious. And it is why the "New Left" will have no appreciable impact on the working-class movement as a whole, Right, Left or Centre.

Among students and intellectuals its effect is rather more difficult to assess. In certain respects it starts—as compared with Marxist thinking—with an advantage, for the tone and language and preconceptions of the "New Left" writers, being so deeply petty-bourgeois, are more what uncommitted young people in present-day intellectual circles are used to. It is much easier for a young intellectual to become a New Lefter than a Communist and involves far fewer ideological sacrifices—no-one doubts your integrity; you don't feel that you have to defend any aspect of the progressive movement you don't feel particularly moved to defend; instead of having to wage a continuous and sometimes painful war against your old prejudices you will find them held up as positive virtues. As a student once put it to me: "Since I gave up taking the *Worker* and read *Tribune* and *Universities and Left Review* I've felt much happier, and freer somehow." One knew just what he meant. But what he had freed himself from was not, as he thought, sectarian politics but the need to struggle against petty-bourgeois ideas and attitudes.

Joint Participation in Action

But to say only that is not enough, for it is to underestimate the honesty of the impulses which turn young people Leftwards and to underestimate too the capacity of progressive middle-class people to face realities, even ones they find particularly difficult. So far as Communists are concerned the most important thing is the development of unity

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in action on all those issues on which we find ourselves in agreement with other sections of the Left and heaven knows these are not few or trivial. The Communist Party has not spent its time attacking the "New Left" nor does it propose to begin now. Communists welcome sincerely *every* genuine impulse or action which helps build a great peace movement in Britain or strengthens the long hard fight for socialist ideas. It is common participation in common actions for causes on which we can unite rather than long arguments of an abstract kind that will bring the communist and non-communist sections of the Left closer. Communists are always prepared to put their views and take part in discussions which will be helpful in promoting unity and activity; such debate is of the greatest value and ought to increase.

The Family and Communism*

A. Kharchev

BOURGEOIS sociologists who write about the Soviet family love to say that despite all "attempts of the Bolsheviks" to do away with the family, it has succeeded in remaining in existence. They assure us that a difficult, exhausting "war" has been going on for forty-two years, with varying success, between Soviet power and the family. In this "war" the aggressor is supposed to be the Soviet Government which, as Klaus Mehnert, for instance, says in his book *The Soviet Person,* "began waging a war against the family immediately after the revolution", intent upon destroying it. Today, in the opinion of these "strategists", "Bolshevism's first attack upon one's personal life has been repulsed", but the position of the family is still a dangerous one inasmuch as the calm that has set in does not signify that "they [the Communists—*A. Kh.*] have overcome their hatred for the family".

Averell Harriman, in a recent pamphlet entitled *Peace with Russia*? also keeps talking about certain contradictions between the policy of the Soviet State and the "craving for individuality and seclusion", which is alleged to be characteristic of Soviet family people.

Soviet reality fully refutes the assertions of the bourgeois ideologists who distort the position of the family under socialism. All the work of the Communist Party and the Soviet Government is directed towards strengthening and developing family relations under the new social conditions.

Change in Marital and Family Relations

The family is an intricate, many-sided social phenomenon. In it the natural biological relations of the sexes are linked with the social function of bringing up children and they are ennobled by social consciousness. As V. I. Lenin pointed out, people in these relations have not only what is given them by nature, but also what is acquired through culture. The richer the spiritual life of society and of each of its members, the more is this life reflected in the character of marriage and the family.

Friedrich Engels, in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, showed that the monogamous family is the result not of a "natural tendency" of people towards monogamy, as many bourgeois scholars still assume. It arose as a result of the accumulation of wealth and its concentration in the hands of male owners. Before the appearance of private property the clan was the elementary social unit, and marital relations did not involve any of those prohibitions which are characteristic of a class society. As Engels pointed out, the ultimate reason for these injunctions in all their forms, legal, moral and religious, was the striving of property owners to pass their property on, through inheritance, to children "whose paternity was undisputed".

This function of the family makes it a reliable support for any exploiting regime. Hence the interest in strengthening this private-property nucleus of society, manifested by all exploiting classes of the past and present. At the same time all of them strengthened and strengthen the family chiefly by one means: strengthening the power of the men, and limiting the rights of the women in the family. This strengthening of the property foundations of family relations is accompanied by a weakening of their moral principles: cash is crowding out love; it is not the emotions, but the law or mercenary motives that keep the spouses together. This by no means signifies that in the exploiters' society there have been or are no

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marriages based on love, or lasting, healthy family relations. We are speaking of the most characteristics traits and tendencies inherent in these relations under conditions of antagonistic class formations, and, in the first place, of the marital and family morale of the dominating classes.

The specific nature of monogamy based on property makes it the centre of keen contradictions, the chief of which are the contradictions between the man and the subjected woman, between economic calculation and the feelings of the people who are married. This antagonistic nature of the family based on property can be seen especially clearly under capitalist conditions.

It goes without saying that communism cannot help but repudiate *such* marriage and *such* a family. However, the repudiation of marital and family relations which are based on money and the humiliation of women never meant that the Marxists repudiated the family as such. Furthermore, Marxism and Leninism always contrasted the family based on property with the more stable, morally pure monogamous family, the "marriage for love" as Lenin put it.

Whereas most bourgeois sociologists regard the family in its bourgeois form as an eternal, immutable institution, Marxism and Leninism, which scientifically showed the *social nature* of marital and family relations, declare that the family is a phenomenon which originated and is developing historically. The changes in the structure, social functions, economic and spiritual life of the family are conditioned, in the final analysis, by the development of the economy of society, by the change in its *bases*. Inasmuch as the family includes not only the economic but also the moral relations between the people, it also develops under the influence of spiritual culture and cultural traditions, and is *relatively independent* in its development.

The socialist revolution, which destroys private ownership of the means of production and which produces a fundamental transformation in all social relations, also brings about a qualitative change in family life. Private property monogamy, which is based on economic calculation, is replaced by socialist monogamy, which is based on a feeling of mutual attraction and love, and is, primarily, the result of the need of people for personal happiness, motherhood and fatherhood. Thus, the transformation of marital and family relations in the U.S.S.R. was not the result of any subjective aspirations, but an *objective necessity* born of the collapse of the old bourgeois system. At the same time it should be borne in mind that it began under conditions when the young Soviet Republic was engaged in a difficult struggle against the interventionists, White Guards, banditry, famine, under conditions when the survivals of private-property society were still very strong. These extremely unfavourable conditions in a number of cases could not fail to influence the process of the formation and development of the new family, weakening its stability and leading to various leftist kinks, like the preaching of "free love". Despite the slanderous assertions of bourgeois ideologists, the Communist Party fought resolutely against such manifestations from the very beginning of the Soviet state.

Lenin's View

Lenin devoted much attention to questions of marriage and the prospects for the development of marital and family relations. In one of his letters to Inessa Armand, who was preparing to write a brochure on this subject, Lenin wrote:

"I suggest that you entirely throw out the 'demand (by the women) for free love'.

"This is actually not a proletarian but a bourgeois demand.

"As a matter of fact, how do you interpret it? How *can* one interpret it?

"1. Freedom *from* material (financial) considerations in the matter of love?

"2. Also *from* material concerns?

"3. From religious prejudices?

"4. From papa's injunctions?

"5. From the prejudices of 'society'?

"6. From one's narrow surroundings (peasant, petty bourgeois, or intellectual-bourgeois)?

"7. From the bonds of the law, the court and the police?

"8. From anything serious in love?

"9. From child-bearing?

"10. Freedom of adultery? etc.

". . . Just for the very reason that in modern society the classes that are the most verbose, noisy, and 'in the lime-light' interpret 'free love' in the light of points Nos. 8-10, it is for this very reason that it is not a proletarian but a bourgeois demand.

"Points Nos. 1-2, and then Nos. 1-7 are most important for the proletariat, and these do not constitute 'free love'." (*Works*, Vol. 35, pp. 137-138.)

Thus we see that Lenin regarded the main task of the Party and of all Soviet society not to destroy the family, but to liberate it from hypocrisy, from banality, egoism, and all kinds of reactionary prejudices. Furthermore, Lenin's demand for freedom in marital and family relations was directed not only against bourgeois religious views on marriage and the family, but also against a primitive, flippant attitude towards these most important social institutions. In one of his talks with Klara Zetkin Lenin stressed the fact

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that 'lack of restraint in one's sexual life is bourgeois: it is a sign of demoralisation. . . . Self-control and self-discipline are not slavery; they are necessary in love" (K. Zetkin: *Reminiscences about Lenin,* 1955, p. 50). Socialism by no means frees a person from the "serious in love", from those economic and moral obligations which are born of marriage, nor does it free *one of one's conjugal or parental duty.*

The bonds of the bourgeois-landowner's law, which in the past fettered marital and family relations, were severed in our country at the moment of the Great October Revolution. But, as Lenin frequently pointed out, the adoption of a new, socialist law marked only the *beginning of a revolution* in marital and family relations, and by no means the revolution itself.

The chief prerequisite and condition for the formation and development of the new socialist family was the ensuring of equal rights for women, their liberation from the economic and spiritual oppression that weighed them down, and their being drawn into active public life. We must not forget that even today women in many capitalist lands still have the status of "second-grade citizens", and receive considerably less pay for their work than men do. Madame Jeanne Laurent, president of the Belgian Christian Women Workers' Union, speaking at the Conference on Questions of the Family held in Rome in 1957, said that the level of literacy and vocational training among women even in the foremost bourgeois countries of Europe was considerably below that of men. And this is not an accidental phenomenon, for the "industrialists are quite content with a situation when the women are poorly qualified, for this provides them with a large number of poorly-skilled workers who receive very low pay". This low status of woman is connected with conceptions of the alleged limited ability and inferiority of woman, ideas which the exploiters' society has been instilling in people for many centuries.

Tsarist Russia, as is known, was a relatively poorly developed country, and therefore the unequal position of women here assumed much cruder and more cynical forms than in the modern capitalist West. It is sufficient to point out that according to the 1897 census 55 per cent of the Russian women who worked for pay were employed as servants, 25 per cent worked as hired farm hands for the landowners and kulaks, 13 per cent worked in industry and construction, and only 4 per cent in the field of education and public health. As regards the national regions, there the virtually complete illiteracy of women was combined with such customs and traditions as bride-money, polygamy, the wearing of a yashmak, and the like.

Women in Socialist Countries

The position of women in the U.S.S.R. (as also in the other socialist countries) differs from their position under capitalism as day from night. Immediately after the socialist revolution women received all political and civil rights. After the victory of the October Revolution the Communist Party of the Soviet Union worked consistently to ensure that equality of rights was not merely juridical, but realised in practice. At the same time, as Lenin stressed in his talk with Klara Zetkin, the communist educational work conducted among the women was closely connected with educational work among men, the aim of which was to wipe out in them their old, slave-owning attitude towards women "to its very last, its tiniest roots". In the next period of the development of Soviet society the results of this work by the Party were confirmed and greatly strengthened by the cultural revolution which put an end, for all time, to the spiritual enslavement of women and immeasurably enriched and ennobled the relations between the sexes.

Finally, the socialist industrialisation of the U.S.S.R. and the collectivisation of agriculture drew masses of women into social production and on a qualitatively new, socialist basis. Soviet women are not subjected to any discrimination either in the division of labour or in pay.

Unable to be silent regarding these tremendous achievements of Soviet society in the struggle for the freedom, equal rights, and dignity of woman, bourgeois "scholars" are endeavouring to "interpret" them in their usual manner and to present them as an organised campaign headed by the state and directed against womanliness, beauty, love and motherhood.

Yet it is only socialism which can ensure the conditions for the real flourishing of all that is unique and beautiful in the character of woman, for beauty presupposes the absence of a "servile spirit" and the high development of human dignity.

The socialist transformations have not only led to the economic and spiritual emancipation of women, but have also changed the psychology of man. Under conditions when social property dominates, marriages of convenience have lost their objective grounds and their subjective justification. As the material well-being of Soviet people has improved and the network of institutions serving the needs of the family have been expanded, marital and family relations in the U.S.S.R. have become free of a considerable part of the material concerns that are inherent in the families of workers under capitalism. However, the socialist family is still an economic, consumer

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nucleus of society, with its own personal property and income.

Finally, the cultural revolution in the U.S.S.R. played an important role in freeing marital and family relations from class, national and religious prejudices and from those "narrow surroundings (peasants, petty bourgeois, or intellectual bourgeois)" which so restrained and spoiled family life in the past.

Thus a feeling of mutual love between the man and the woman, their voluntary decision to unite their lives and to build their happiness together, can serve as the only moral motive for marriage and the creation of a family under the conditions of socialism. This constitutes the first most important distinction between the socialist family and the family based on private property, and, in particular, the bourgeois family.

The participation of both spouses in public life broadens the field of their common interests and does not permit the outlook of the members of the family to become limited to the narrow confines of the home or to become transformed into a petty-bourgeois outlook.

A second qualitative feature of the socialist family is that in distinction from the family based on property, its basic social function is not the accumulation of wealth and not the transfer of this wealth to others through inheritance, but the bringing up of children. This upbringing activity of the family is of great significance in the life of socialist society and in the building of communism. Hence, under socialism, there are not only objective conditions for the family becoming ever more stable and strong, but also the interest of all society is involved in it.

Survivals from the Past

While differing qualitatively from the family based on property in its essence, the socialist family still retains certain features of marital and family relations which have been inherited from the past. These, for instance, are the existence of private housekeeping, and the survivals of property morale which are still preserved in a number of families. In some cases material difficulties also leave their impress on the life of the family.

One of the survivals of property morale is, at times, the wrong attitude towards women on the part of some men, which is seen occasionally not only in the family. For instance, the press has called attention to the fact that at some collective farms the men try to work as bookeepers, clerks etc., while leaving the difficult physical work for the women. It is hard to expect that such men, on coming home, will offer to help their wives in the various household tasks and in taking care of the children. Furthermore, there are some men who, in their family life, also try to observe the "table of ranks", regarding it as the woman's mission to do all the housework.

Needless to say, society and the state cannot regulate the division of labour in the home. But the situation is different as regards social production: we consider it an urgent necessity to establish stricter control over the fufilment of the laws governing the work of women. If proper order is established those who suffer from prejudices will gradually learn to conduct themselves correctly at the home as well.

Survivals of the past are also to be found in the relations between parents and children. Things sometimes go to such an extent that some people abandon their little children and aged parents to the mercy of fate, are rude to them and often humiliate them. Some may protest that these are exceptional cases. That is so. But the trouble is that the neighbours and other people consider them an every-day, ordinary occurrence. And it is this which unties the hands of those morally depraved persons who are still capable of raising their hands against their mothers or refuse to help their children.

As regards family upbringing, bourgeois survivals are manifested first of all in encouraging egoism in the child, in creating for the child such conditions as do not help to develop moral qualities and such character traits as a love for work, a spirit of collectivism, and respect for other people. When the family does not pay any attention to the children or, on the contrary, caters to all their caprices, they develop into people who lack moral principles and whom society is forced to re-educate.

Finally, such a survival of the past as philistinism is very dangerous for the life and stability of the family. In it the egoism of people, their self-satisfaction and indifference, manifest themselves in their crudest and aesthetically most unattractive form. At the same time these philistines possess an amazing ability to adapt themselves to surrounding circumstances, to play the hypocrite and conceal their real character. The highest aim of the philistine is his own satisfaction and his own well-being. For the sake of this he is ready to sacrifice everything on earth and to commit any crime which he, in his cowardice, is capable of. When philistinism takes hold it transforms the family into a weapon for greed, into an asylum from public affairs and the fulfilment of social duty.

The chief difficulty in combating bourgeois survivals in marital and family relations lies in the fact that they are frequently concealed from the eyes of society, and, on the other hand, they

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can be "reproduced" in every new generation, inasmuch as the family is one of the principal factors in building up people's personal character.

Bourgeois survivals are one of the reasons for divorces under socialist conditions. However, if we compare the number of divorces in the U.S.S.R., not with the data of tsarist Russia nor with the data of other countries where divorces are actually forbidden, but with the U.S.A., this comparison will not be in favour of capitalism: in 1957 the number of divorces in the U.S.A. was almost threefold that in the U.S.S.R.

An important factor is the degree of faith that the population has in the marriage institution, as can be seen from the number of marriages and the birth-rate. In the U.S.S.R. the number of marriages per 1,000 people in 1957 was 1.4 times what it was in pre-revolutionary Russia, and amounts to 12 today, whereas in the U.S.A. it is only 8.3, in England—7.6, and in France—7.0.

The birth-rate in the U.S.S.R. today is higher than that in most capitalist countries.

The statistics for the number of marriages and the birth-rate are further evidence of the stability and moral purity of the socialist family, evidence of the fact that despite the assertions of bourgeois ideologists, it is an incomparably higher form of marital and family relations than private-property monogamy.

Communism and the Future of the Family

The launching of the U.S.S.R. upon the period of all-round building of a communist society makes the question of the future of the family and the trends of development in the relations between man and woman one of great importance practically. This question is becoming ever more acute, since it is frequently brought up in the West in praise of bourgeois dissoluteness or for slanderous attacks against communism.

There are two sources for these absurd, slanderous conceptions of the future of marriage and the family. The first of these is the amorality that flourishes among certain classes of bourgeois society, the increase in all sorts of temporary, extra-marital ties and open prostitution. These symptoms of the crisis in marital and family relations as a result of the depraving influence of private property, parasitism and money, are accepted by some "prophets" as the beginning of the destruction of the family in general and the collapse of monogamy as such. The second subjective source for the "theories" of Orwell, Huxley and their ilk, is their primitive understanding of what love itself is, of maternity, paternity, and the degrading of these lofty, primarily moral feelings to the level of animal instincts.

The real, genuine future of families as society moves towards communism will be determined by the influence of such factors as, first, the further development of social production and the transition to distribution according to needs, secondly, the all-round development of the individual and the increasing interest of society in the correct, communist upbringing of the young generation. At the same time, the formation of the *communist family* will also mean the gradual eradication of the differences between worker and peasant families, between urban and rural families, differences which still exist under socialism. This eradication will take place as a result of eliminating the differences between classes, between city and countryside, between those who do mental and those who do physical work.

Socialisation of Every-day Life

The first very important result for the family, arising from the transition to communism, will be the socialisation of every-day life, which will completely free woman from exhausting household work, and will enable the family to devote considerably more energy and time to cultural activities and the upbringing of the children. The socialisation of every-day life does not mean any "levelling of family life", as some critics of communism assume, but, on the contrary, it will enable people and families to manifest their individual tastes most fully, for every family will have an opportunity to make a choice from among dozens of dining-rooms, cafés, and other public service institutions, whichever best suits their needs.

Communism in no way will mean compelling people always to use public institutions to satisfy the every-day needs of the family. Home dinners, suppers, parties, and receptions will undoubtedly be preserved to the extent that they are necessary for the family to satisfy its need for "the joys of home" and contact with its friends under home conditions.

This process of transferring the functions of private housekeeping to social industry can already be observed today. Under the seven-year-plan, the number of enterprises rendering various services to the population, and public catering establishments, is being greatly increased. Furthermore, these enterprises are being built not only in cities and workers' settlements, but also in collective farm villages. The improvement in the well-being of the collective farms and farmers is, in turn, leading to the gradual disappearance of such elements of private housekeeping in the village as individual kitchen-gardens and individually-owned livestock. This fact considerably lightens the work of the collective farm woman in the family, and

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constitutes an important step on the way to socialised life.

However, in order to ensure the transferring to social management of more of the functions now performed by the family, the corresponding conditions must be created. The organisation and quality of the work of enterprises and institutions serving the needs of the family must be improved. At present the work of many of these institutions is the subject of serious criticism. In particular, the fact that the quality of the food served in dining-rooms and home-service kitchens obviously does not correspond to their prices is a big obstacle that keeps many families from taking advantage of their services. Undoubtedly, shortcomings of all kinds in the work of enterprises which are called upon to make life easier, have a negative effect upon and often compromise the very idea of a socialised mode of life.

As many elements of housework vanish and the housekeeping activities of the family decrease during the transition to communism, there will be a change in its moral and educational functions.

Upbringing in the family will be increasingly combined with direct social upbringing. The U.S.S.R. already has the world's widest network of all kinds of children's institutions. In accordance with the decision of the Twenty-First Congress of the C.P.S.U., the construction of boarding schools has been launched in the country. By 1965 their number will be increased many times. One of the tasks of the boarding-schools today is to help the family to bring up the children, the help being not only of a moral nature, but material as well, for parents pay only part of the actual cost of maintaining their children in the boarding school. Then, too, the schools enjoy the experience and direct help of parents. As a result, the moral influence of the parents on the children is retained, but in addition to it there is another powerful factor in forming the personality of the child, the collective of children of his own age. One must not forget that in the family it is sometimes difficult to protect the children against egoistic tendencies. When the experience of the parents is combined with the knowledge of the teachers, with the responsiveness and impartiality of the collective, the effectiveness of the upbringing is considerably enhanced.

It must also be remembered that as a result of the war the fate of many Soviet women was that of the unmarried mother, and tens of thousands of children are now growing up without a father's influence. The Soviet press is now raising the question of doing away with the notorious blank in the birth-certificates of such children. However, that is only one half-measure. In order to render real aid to single mothers and their children it is first necessary correctly to orient public opinion. The war meant countless sacrifices for our country, and the greatest of them was the loss of millions of people, chiefly men. As a result of this many women remained widows, while many others were unable to marry. And when such a woman becomes a mother she should not be condemned, but she and her child should be given moral support, for it would be unjust to deprive of the right of motherhood those who do not have the opportunity to create a family. Communist morality is in principle opposed to liaisons when they are the result of dissoluteness and levity, but motherhood on the part of an unmarried woman is often the result of something else, the desire to have and to bring up a child, and this has nothing whatever in common with immorality. The state helps such mothers, one of the most important forms of this aid being the boarding school.

The development of the network of boarding schools will greatly relieve the parents, especially the mothers, of the daily care of their children. However, this does not mean that the moral and educational functions of the family will disappear, for the joys of fatherhood and motherhood are as necessary to man as aid in bringing up the children. It can be assumed that the feeling of parental love will not vanish but, on the contrary, will become even stronger in view of the general cultural development of people. On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that the parents' influence on the child is profoundly specific, and cannot be replaced by any other influence. The child's love for and trust in his mother and father, those special relations of parental nearness which develop in every real family, greatly lighten the process of upbringing and transform it into one of those elements of what is known as family happiness. It is therefore beyond doubt that under communism the direct contact between the parents and children in the home will remain for them as great a necessity as it is today.

The Shorter Working Day

Of great importance for the life of the Soviet family is the gradual reduction in the length of the working day, now being effected by the Party and the Government. This measure permits more time to be devoted to family life, and increases the role and significance of leisure in the life of the family and in family upbringing. All of this, in turn, creates better conditions for the cultural development of people. It follows that the ways of using one's free time will be improved, and the life of the family will be ever more closely linked

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with the work of clubs, libraries, sports societies, and creative art collectives.

Much has already been and is being done to organise the cultural relaxation of the working people. However, far from all the material means are being used effectively, nor do they adequately satisfy the constantly growing demands of the family. Take the most ordinary example: the members of a family may wish to spend the evening together, but do not want to stay at home. Families as a rule do not go to the theatre or cinema all together, nor does one wish to spend all his leisure simply at performances. In the summer one can go to the park, but what about winter or when the weather is bad? The solution to the problem seems to suggest itself: almost every enterprise has its club or House of Culture where one can go and find something to his liking. However, this advice cannot always be followed today. The clubs, as a rule, engage chiefly in organising various "activities" most often of a useful nature but at times dull. If a person does not want to take part in any of these activities there is nothing for him to do at the club. Paradoxical though it may sound, it is a fact that the heads of many clubs are least of all concerned about having people attracted to the place, simply to come there to relax. Sometimes in club reports one comes across an item about "family gatherings". But that is a rather rare phenomenon, a fact which merely shows the limited nature of the work of the club. It is almost amusing to note that some Scientists' Clubs virtually duplicate the work of scientific departments and institutes. It is sufficient to glance at the list of "activities" conducted by them to be convinced of this. One might get the impression that a scientific worker relaxes best only when he takes part in the "scientific sections" of his club. And the reason for this is that some club workers fear the very word "diversion".

The family which can find nothing to do at its very own club, finds no refuge in the café either, although everyone knows the café should differ from the usual public catering establishment: it is supposed to be a place where one can not only eat, but also read a newspaper or magazine, arrange a meeting with a friend, enjoy a talk, in other words it should be a place of relaxation, a place where one can spend one's time pleasantly and usefully.

We still do not have enough sports buildings which one can go to freely.

And so, the shorter the working day becomes the greater are the demands made of public institutions which are called upon to organise the leisure of families, and the more energetically must those people work who are entrusted with this important and difficult social measure. They must show greater initiative and inspiration.

The reduction in the working day will inevitably lead to a state when the upbringing of the children will cease to be the duty of only the women, which is frequently the case today, but will become the joint affair of both parents. This, in turn, will considerably increase the field of the common, daily interests of men and women, and will make their family relations more meaningful and stable.

In many cities and villages all over the country, especially among the youth, a movement has got under way for the institution of new Soviet rites and customs—those connected with coming-of age, marriage, the birth of a child, and other important events in the life of the family. Komsomol (Y.C.L.) weddings, with their simple, beautiful, and very significant ritual, have become very popular in Leningrad. With the opening of the municipal Palace of Weddings, the very act of registering one's marriage has changed in many respects, and has become more imposing and beautiful. The initiative of the Tukums District Executive Committee of the Latvian S.S.R., which has passed a decision on celebrating the birth of a child, and the day when one comes of age, and also noting Memorial Day for those who have died, also merits universal approval, in our opinion. Such a celebration as Coming-of-age Day is not only a beautiful occasion that appeals to the esthetic feelings of people, but it is also of tremendous moral significance, for it inculcates in the youth a feeling of their responsibilty for their future and stresses the ideological succession of the generations.

Morals and Public Opinion

As a result of the cultural and esthetic development of all society the centre of gravity in regulating marital and family relations will be shifted from law and legal sanctions to morals and public opinion. This process is already taking place today. There are frequent cases when public condemnation, or the fear of it, affects people who have violated the standards of behaviour more strongly than any punishment by law. However, when noting this increased influence of the public on marriage and family life, it would be wrong to reconcile ourselves to the fact that some public organisations and organs of the press at times are indiscreet and even unceremonious when considering the family conflicts. The intimate life of people frequently attracts all kinds of lovers of "piquant" gossip, but this by no means signifies that such curiosity should be satisfied. The struggle for the triumph of the principles of

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communist morale in everyday life has nothing whatever in common with the vulgar relishing of the "details", and with petty "guardianship" over the intimate life of peoples.

The gradual limiting of the sphere of action of legal standards and sanctions does not exclude the necessity of further perfecting the laws. The present Soviet legislation covering marriage and the family does not provide, for instance, for the material responsibility of the father for the upbringing of his children if he has refused to register the marriage. This seems to us to be wrong. Some are of the opinion that any solution of this question will merely encourage "light-minded ties", But cannot the law be so formulated as to avoid this encouragement?

It seems to us that the law on annulling a marriage also lags behind the moral development of our society. We feel that such requirements as publication of an advertisement about one's divorce, and the obligatory consent of both parties to the divorce, do not help to strengthen the marriage institution, but merely give rise to lies and hypocrisy in marital and family relations. It is wrong to regard every divorce as immoral. There are situations when divorce is more moral than the preservation of the marriage.

Communism will be an epoch of complete freedom of marriage, the complete fulfilment of those first seven points about which Lenin wrote in his letter to Inessa Armand. It is our opinion that it will also be a *period of consistent monogamy*. And this is not surprising, for in a communist marriage the spiritual, moral and esthetic side will acquire even greater significance than ever before. This does not imply that under communism there will be no family contradictions or conflicts. Harmony in love is not an adequate reflection of social harmony.

The wealth and diversity of social, public ties under communism will not lead to a weakening of intra-family relations. In a communist society the family will lose many of the specific features and functions characteristic of it in the past and the present. But this by no means signifies a "withering away" of the family. It will merely be a condition for the fuller realisation of its main purpose: to be a stronghold of love and the personal happiness of people, and to train the young shoots of mankind.

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The Fight against Dismissals

Jack Moody

THE trading position, the high imports, the low exports, the falling gold reserves, the risk of inflation, of deflation, the need for lower living standards to enable Britain to compete in foreign markets. Goodness me, when workers are told they are redundant, what a variety of reasons are found for it. All lined up in order of priority according to the needs of the moment, each carrying its whimper or threat.

It is easy, too, when such a situation is with us, to listen to the current tale of woe, and while trying to understand it, lose the initiative and accept the dismissals.

How dare they say we should lower our living standards when the cause of unemployment is a living standard which is already too low?

The logic of such an argument is that the first country whose people stop eating at the table and start grazing in the fields will be winning, but even should we be persuaded that that was a good thing we would never reach the grass-eating stage because war would break out long before then. Employers want to sell more than grazing rights and would soon step up arms production and start to use them in order to do so.

How dare they say it, when for man's progress generally there is the essential that an ever increasing investment be made in capital equipment? The only incentive for that investment is a demand for commodities which is greater than our existing productive capacity can supply. Unemployment creates the exact opposite to that. Whatever problems it is claimed that Britain has, we must insist that the datum for solving them is for everyone to be usefully employed.

Unemployment is a social canker which must not be allowed to spread.

Organisation and Dismissals

If we do not fight against dismissals then the proposition must be accepted that—apart from anything else—men and women should be denied the right to work for themselves and society, while at the same time, in deference to Christian doctrine, society pays them a dole which maintains life.

People will not accept this idiocy, they will fight for the right to work, but one of the necessities for that fight is a properly run factory trade union organisation and Party branch. At the risk then of sounding trite, I would say the kind of fight which opposes redundancy is determined a long time before the tap on the shoulder.

The trade union organisation is necessary to conduct the fight but, however efficient or militant it may be, inevitably it will be drawn towards the workings of social democracy, for better industrial relations, joint consultation, etc., which within the limits the employers agree to their functioning mean a tolerance of capitalism.

The trade union organisation, unless it has some sense of direction, will be able to handle each problem as it comes only on the basis of getting the best out of it for the people it represents, and in a redundancy situation it would mean eventually discussing who is to be sacked, because of becoming bogged down in the employers' problems. A functioning Party branch is the only way in which this sense of direction can be given.

It is not enough to know that capitalism is the cause of redundancy, but sense of direction should be understood to mean seeing all matters as products of capitalism and handling them in a way which furthers the way forward to socialism.

This will lead to a point of view and all kinds of activity on Peace, wages, housing, pensions, hospitals, education, in fact everything, and when responsible statements are made by us on affairs which are considered to be the prerogative of employers and the Government, workers generally will become more confident in themselves and their class.

A group of individual members cannot give this direction. I know how easy it is to have a chat with another comrade on the next bench about a problem which has just arisen. This is no substitute for properly conducted Party branch meetings, where organised discussion can take place.

Unless such activity has taken place we will be floundering when dismissals come. However much people wish to stop them, the arguments will all be on the employers' battleground of sales falling, prices rising, competition more severe, and the rest of it. Once the struggle develops along these lines the battle is beginning to be lost, instead of which if we all have some understanding of dismissals as part of the process of capitalism, and already in a public way have made our voice felt, then the matter is seen in a different light.

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Politics and Dismissals

Do you remember "Last in, first out"? What a pernicious slogan that was! I hope no one takes part in any discussion around that. Employers will use it as a fall-back after first saying who *they* want to dismiss and it may seem we have gained something. After hearing the expression I always visualised the poor last-one-in wandering about in eternal purgatory, always the first one out.

Another was that there are too many non-productive workers, and they should be the ones to go. Whatever we may think of the inefficiencies of the capitalist system, that kind of argument at best will only delay the dismissals, and at worst put a few more on the list. The objective is to stop dismissals and during the course of doing it help everyone, including ourselves, to become more clear on the theory of surplus value. At the other end of the scale one must guard against trying to make a factory struggle opposing dismissals an action which is going to end only after having established a Socialist Britain. The extent to which it becomes a struggle for higher or lower aims is for our comrades to assess.

I remember when dismissals were taking place in a certain factory a mass meeting was called, and the spokesman for the Shop Stewards' Committee, instead of speaking about the immediate problem of dismissals and the need to defend the right to work, spoke of the war in Korea. The result was confusion and no response. The wider political issues would, in a natural process of development, become part of the subsequent discussion and meetings. That occasion was a miscalculation of the situation, but for sure some ultra-left influences will rise to the surface and people who you have never seen or heard of—or will again—will be pressing you to take the objectives further than those immediately realisable. The accuracy of decisions taken will depend on the kind of branch meetings, discussion and activity which have taken place.

On returning from a May Day demonstration a few years back I caught my father in a reminiscing mood, and one of his memories was, when as a young man on a May Day he had stood with a pint outside the Nelson in Kentish Town and wished Hoppy Peel good health as Hoppy and a few other stalwarts carried the banner along to the St. Pancras arches where the march was to start from.

The span of his life covered the 1914 war, 1939 war and, of course, the periods of economic depression in between. In spite of all this experience he has never seen himself, nor does he see himself now, as helping to shape events. Now my old man has been a Labour Party supporter all his life, would not dream of voting Tory and gives to any good cause. But I know that his only quality as a Socialist was that of strong class consciousness. This is not enough and there are too many like him. The 1914 war and the failure to achieve socialism since have been because the British working class did not have just that necessary amount of political understanding to ally to the finest traditions of class consciousness to be found anywhere in the world. It is also because of this that we are still faced with the crude state of affairs when our power to work and create cannot be properly made use of and we are put out of work. In spite of noble resolutions before 1914, saying that workers of the world should not take part in war, they were caught up in the jingoism of 1914 and went out to slaughter each other.

After this came the economic slump of the thirties, which was the forerunner of the next war in 1939.

Make the parallel with today, and one is appalled at the terrible possibilities. The recent sackings and the talk of stepping up the export drive are signs that an unstable society may be moving into classical slump conditions. The political and economic organisations of the European Common Market and the Outer Seven are also symptomatic of the move to a condition where rigging and manoeuvre is necessary to expand trade within a relatively diminishing total market. One does not have to read the left-wing press to know the relationship between these two organisations. Either one in certain conditions might wish to use arms to extricate themselves from an economic crisis, or to advance their own position.

The antidote for developing slump tendencies, and therefore war trends, is higher wages, better living, schools, hospitals, and so on. Full employment is a necessary part of all this, and to maintain full employment we must fight for it.

A Recent Experience

A few weeks ago while involved in a strike against dismissals at Hoovers, I met three students who had just taken their examinations in sociology. It was interesting that having recently completed a study of Political theories and Social movements their interest was mostly in joint consultation.

Joint consultation they felt was the only thing wrong at Hoover concerning the 870 who were to be sacked. If the situation had been *handled* differently by the management everything would have been all right. What a laugh! Hoovers are supposed to be the last word in that line of business. If they could not handle it, who could? They

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help to teach others the arts of Human Industrial Relations, or is it Industrial Human Relations? I never know, but the word to define the expression is one I do not normally use outside the workshop.

I hope the students were impressed with my view, that however much joint consultation, however smooth the chat, the reality is still there, and on such issues as redundancy is only intended to make more velvety the glove that conceals. Having said that, I did not mean we should be against joint consultation. There is no point in creating a vacuum. We have to meet the management to discuss matters. What must be, though, is that it is not substituted in our minds for the fact.

Thousands and thousands of pounds must have been spent by Hoovers and others to build a facade of factory democracy. The moment of truth destroys the illusion. In one week of fighting against the sacking most of the window dressing was destroyed.

The apprentices, who get the full psychological treatment, ranging from threats that their indentures will be withheld, to lectures on why they should avoid contact with Shop Stewards, collected over £21 for the fund. Charge-hands and foremen, wobbling precariously on the fence, gave donations and sent messages of support.

We had been told that 870 were to be dismissed from factories in Scotland, Wales, High Wycombe and London. London employs 2,000 and 120 were to go. A factory meeting was called, something which had never been successful before. There was one hundred per cent response, including those departments who knew they were not affected. The proposition from the Shop Stewards' Committee was "Everyone to be kept on full pay until suitable alternative work is found either inside or outside the factory." Out of two thousand, ten voted against. The immediate policy was, every effort to be made to end the strike victoriously, as soon as possible, which meant hitting as hard and as quickly as we could. The decision to strike was taken at 9 a.m., by 12.30 p.m., 2,000 of the first strike bulletin were issued, the television, radio, newspapers, had been contacted, arrangements were being made for Regent Street to be "sandwich boarded". In a couple of days tens of thousands of leaflets and collecting sheets had been issued, 90 factories had had speakers visit them, our combine committee which has been meeting twice a year for seven years proved its worth in the contacts between the other factories. Five hundred employed at Hoovers in High Wycombe took an immediate decision to stop work in support; mass meetings were arranged in Wales and Scotland. The strong picketing reflected the activity, and sense of inspiration, workers began to feel the responsibilities they had to each other. A number of mass meetings were held, and by the time the Employers' Federation intervened after six days, to agree to a return to work with no sackings, every worker knew a little more about the instability of capitalist society, and felt a bigger person because of the part he had played in helping to correct that society.

Discussion contribution

On Lessons from Piccadilly

Michael Cohen

IRWIN ROSS's article "Lessons from Piccadilly" (*Marxism Today*, July, 1960) was an excellent introduction to a discussion on housing and town and country planning problems. It correctly emphasised that these problems can only be effectively solved in a Socialist Britain. However, an exposition on this subject claiming to be Marxist is surely incomplete if it fails to give a clear guide to action to the organised Labour movement relative to an immediate programme which could rapidly win substantial improvements in the living and working conditions of the people. Our Party has grown and developed because it has always recognised that socialism can only be won if propaganda for socialism is intimately linked with the fight for the workers' immediate demands. By this process millions of workers learn from *personal experience what active course* to take to win a worthwhile future.

Some valuable statements have recently been made by leading British architects dealing with urgent problems. That is a good beginning, but only a beginning for all that. There should be more recognition in these high quarters of the role that the British Labour movement can play. Recent events confirm that mass action of organised workers can enforce measures to mitigate the evils of Toryism and landlordism and thereby

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make possible a speed-up of slum clearance and rebuilding according to plans already devised by many of the very best British architects. In recent years many professional workers have understood the need to build trade union organisation. By so doing they have considerably strengthened their ability to increase their salaries and status and to improve their working conditions. Furthermore, as trade unionists they have done much to influence the working-class fight for peace, the proper use of science, extension of the social services, etc. The recruitment of thousands of architects and building technicians into the appropriate trade unions would considerably increase the prospects for winning the short- and long term aims to which Comrade Ross refers. The building unions and the trades councils particularly should be requested to give attention to this very important question.

The organised fight for a housing policy corresponding to working-class needs is developing at a rapid pace. In London, Liverpool, Manchester and Salford particularly trades unionists, Labour Party members, Communists and members of tenants' and community associations are uniting for this purpose. In some instances the movement has developed sufficient support to draw in Trades Councils and even City Councils.

One example of this will suffice. At its July meeting the Manchester and Salford Trades Council (uniting some 100,000 trade unionists) unanimously adopted a resolution sponsored by its Executive Committee as follows:

> "That the Manchester and Salford Trades Council expresses its deep-felt concern relative to the serious housing shortage in the cities of Manchester and Salford and the slow tempo of slum clearance which compels many thousands of families to live in distressful conditions. Having in mind that Local Authorities are being severely hampered in developing their housing programmes by high interest charges, and other Government restrictions, this Trades Council resolves to enter into consultation with the two City Councils for the purpose of pressing the Government to give full scale assistance for the building of Council houses by raising the subsidies of the 1956 level, and giving back to local authorities the right to borrow money for capital purposes from the Public Works Loan Board at the rate of 3 per cent interest."

On approaching the Salford City Council the Trades Council was informed that the former had already called a conference on housing and the Trades Council was given an invitation to attend. This has been accepted eagerly. This example shows that the idea of developing public support for the housing demands of the working people is beginning to grip the minds of the masses. By so doing it is acquiring a power capable of making a tremendous impact on the policies of the local authorities and the Government.

There need be no void, therefore, between *the achievement of our socialist goal and what can be done now*. We should search out the slum houses and literally pull them down by the agitation of tens of thousands of angry organised workers. We should strengthen the organisations (such as the Communist Party, Shop Stewards' Committees, Trades Councils and tenants' associations) which can lead and broaden the growing mass movement. By all means continue the analysis so ably begun by Comrade Ross, and at the same time fight for slum clearance, lower rents and a rating policy that presses less heavily on working people.

Hold aloft the "Holy Grail" of Town and Country Planning in a Socialist Britain and mark out the path which we have to tread towards it now. We should dig up the Town Planning blueprints which were produced so profusely immediately after the war and develop such mass support for them as will compel the Tory Government to provide the resources for putting their best and most important proposals quickly into operation. For these aims to have any hope of success a new type of M.P. and local councillor must begin to predominate. They must be drawn from militant class-conscious Labour men and women, Communists, trades unionists, co-operators, etc. This Tory Government of Yankee-lickspittles and suicidal warmongers must be compelled to give way in the face of the organised might of the British working class, making possible the election of a socialist majority of Labour and Communist M.P.'s. Such a Parliament in alliance with socialist controlled local councils could begin to tackle Town and Country Planning in the way that Comrade Ross suggests. We will have our own gigantic leaps forward. The speed with which we are able to bring them about, and their magnitude, depend upon the amount of hard, painstaking and consistent work we do from now on to create that fighting working-class unity which will make the victory of socialism certain and secure.

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